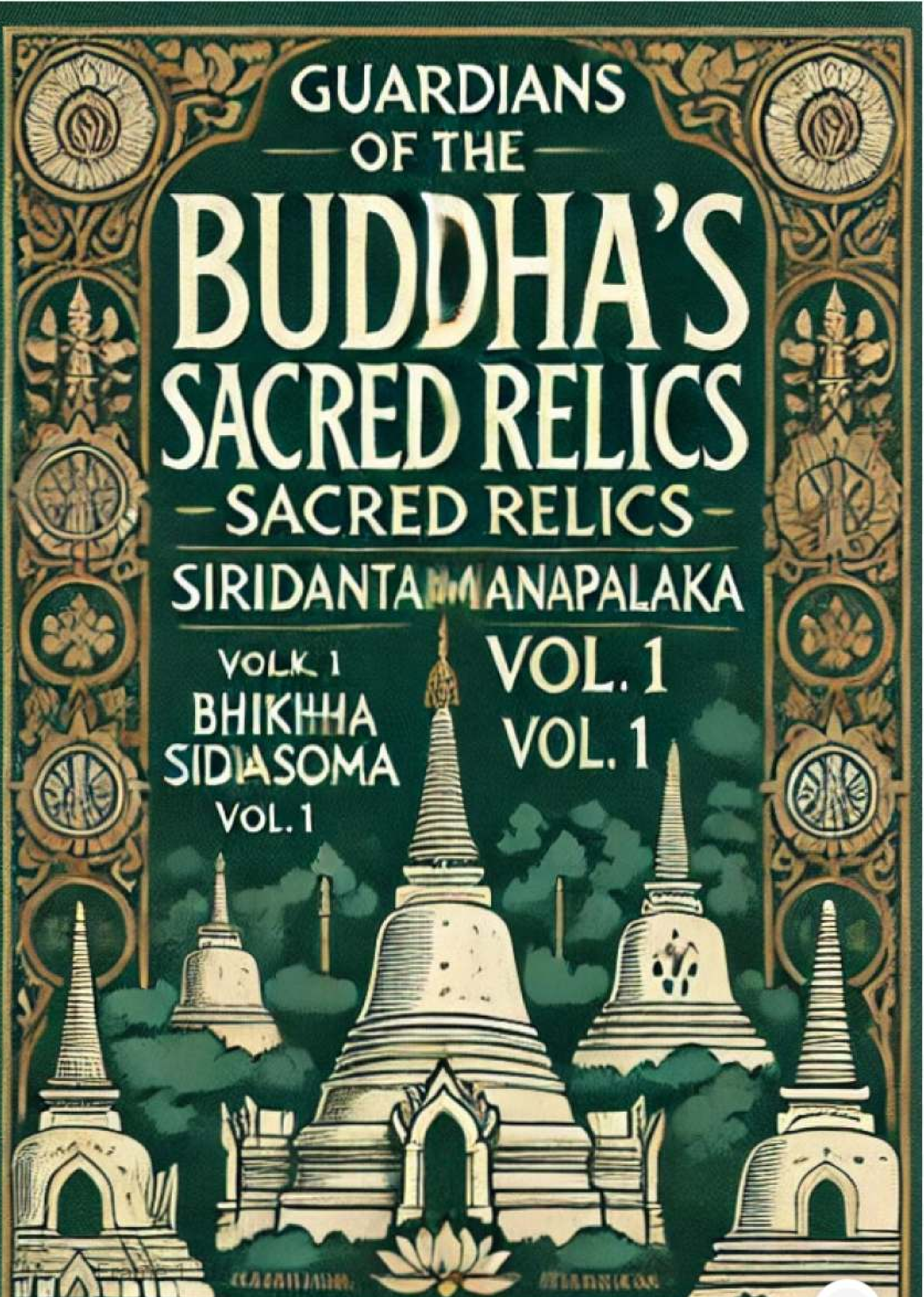
GUARDIANS
OF THE
BUDDHA'S
SACRED RELICS
SACRED RELICS
SIRIDANTAMANAPALAKA
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VOL. 1

Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahāpālaka

Table Of Contents

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsaṃbuddhassa 5

Homage to the Blessed One! 6

Homage to Buddha's Various Relics 7

Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha Vandana 8

Publication Record 9

Photo Credits and Usage Acknowledgment 10

Copyright Warning 11

First Words of the Buddha: 12

Preface by the Author 13

The Buddha's Contemplation Following His First Words 14

The Life of the Buddha – From Birth to Parinirvana 17

2. The Distribution of Buddha's Relics and the Formation of Stupas 20

3. Relics of the Buddha: Symbolism and Preservation 23

4. Historical Development of Stupa Architecture and Symbolism 24

5.Stupas Enshrining the Buddha's Tooth Relics 26

6.Sacred Relics and Rituals of Veneration 27

7.Dharmarajika Stupa (Dharmarajika: The Great Stupa of Taxila) 30

8.Manikyala Stupa: A Testament to Buddhist Compassion 37

9. Bimaran Stupa No. 2: The Legacy of Mujatria 46

10. Hadda Stupa No. 10 (Tope Kelan): The Great Stupa of Architectural Brilliance 55

11. Jamālgarhī Monastery: A Center of Gandharan Buddhist Heritage 67

12. Ahin Posh Stupa: A Kushan Legacy of Buddhist Relics 74

13. Nagarjunakonda: The Lost Buddhist University of the South 89

14. Rukhuna Stupa: The Apraca King's Legacy 100

16. Dir Museum: A Repository of Sacred Buddhist Relics 114

17. Kunala Stupa: The Story of the Blind Prince and His Devotion 121

18. Sihanada Stupa: The Silver Reliquary of King Indravarman 130

19. The Kanishka Stupa: A Towering Legacy of Devotion 141

20. Takht-i-Bahi Stupa: The Monastic Crown Jewel of Gandhara 154

21. Butkara Stupa: A Testament to Ashoka’s Devotion in Swat Valley 164

22. Sakawagunti Stupa: A Jewel of Buddhist Heritage in Hadda 174

23. Singaṭa Stupa: A Sacred Monument of the Swat Valley 182

24. Namo Ghan Stupa: A Testament to King Suviṣṭhaka's Devotion 190

25. Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic), Kandy 197

26. The Sanchi Stupa (Madhya Pradesh, India) 205

27. The Amaravati Stupa (Andhra Pradesh, India) 209

28. The Ramagrama Stupa (Nepal) 213

29. The Kamari Stupa near Kabul (The Broken Front Tooth Relic) 217

30. Dysentery (Blood Diarrhea) and the Buddha’s Sacred Blood Relics 224

31. The Last Words of the Buddha 233

32. The relics' supernatural properties requiring scientific investigation. 238

33. The Truth Behind the Sacred Tooth Relics from China 241

34. "Challenging Truths: The Global Implications of the Kandy Tooth Relics Debate" 249

35. The Sacred Tooth Relic of Singapore and Symbol of Faith Beyond Perception 257

36. Why Tooth Relics Preservation Refuses DNA and Carbon-14 Testing? 260

37. The Buddha Tooth Relics and Sao Dhammasami 266
38. The Dream of the Sacred Relics : The Scholar's Discovery of the Dreamt Coil 270
39. Ba Maw Sayardawgyi's Receive Two Buddha Tooth Relics 273
40. Devotion at Hswagata Yangon: Worshiping the Tooth of the Lord Buddha 275
41. The Enigmatic Nature of Relics 278
42. A Study of Unexpected Increases 280
43. The Historic Creation of Copied Tooth Relics 282
44. Faith and the Unseen Force: The Monk's Awakening 286
45. The Bone Ashes Relics Findings 289
46. The Broken Bone Relics Findings in Old India 293
47. The Robes of the Buddha (or) The robes, often referred to as "cīvara" in Pali 297
48. Bandhana: The Binding Cloth of the Buddha 302
49.The Founder of Kahu-jo-daro Stupa's Venerable Ashin Mahinda (Relics), the Son of Emperor Ashoka 307
50. The Monk's Last Breath: The Story of the Poison Tooth Relic (Venerable Ārāṇiyaka) 312
51. Research Questions for Dr. Ashin Nyanissara (Sitagu Sayadawgyi) Regarding the Preservation and Testing of Buddha Tooth Relics: 315
52. Debunking misinformation surrounding the Buddha Tooth Relics. 318
53. The King and Princess's office, confirmed by Thura Kyaw, called the letters "forgeries." 319
54 DNA and Carbon Dating in Relic Authentication: Modern Tools, Ancient Truths 323
55. What's the cause, what's the reason of doubt and being busy to seek the Gems in Bones? 324
56. Joint Press Release : Nirvana Temple and Hswagata Forge Collaborative Partnership to Promote Buddhist Values and Community Welfare 339

57. Joint Press Release Statement 343
58. Additional Reference Book 345
59. Thank You Note 347
60. About Author 348
61. Acknowledgments 349
62. Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahaapālaka's published book. 350

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsaṃbuddhassa

Namo
tassa
bhagavato
arahato
sammāsaṃbuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One!

Homage to Arjariyasa, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One.

The Lord Buddha

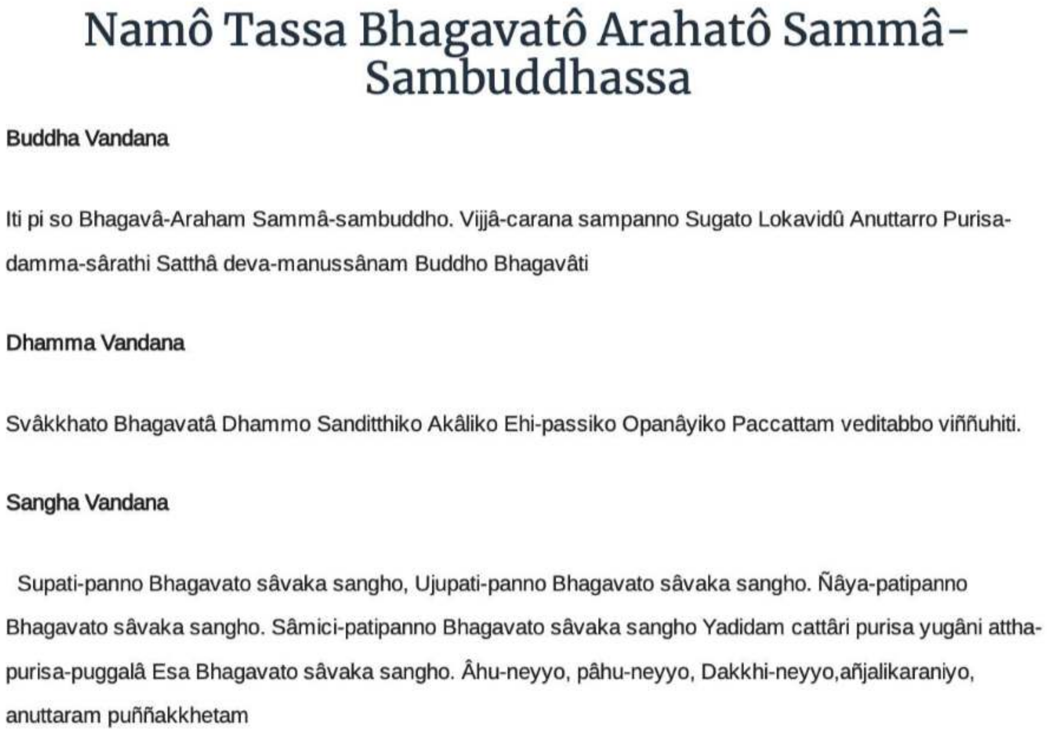
Homage to Buddha's Various Relics

Ye ca Buddha
Homage to Triple Gem & Buddha's Various Relics

Ye ca danta atita ca,ye ca danta anagata paccupanna ca ye danta,

sabbe vandami te aham

Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha Vandana



Namô Tassa Bhagavatô Arahatô Sammâ-Sambuddhassa

Buddha Vandana

Iti pi so Bhagavâ-Araham Sammâ-sambuddho. Vijjâ-carana sampanno Sugato Lokavidû Anuttarro Purisa-damma-sârathi Satthâ deva-manussânam Buddho Bhagavâti

Dhamma Vandana

Svâkkhato Bhagavatâ Dhammo Sanditthiko Akâliko Ehi-passiko Opanâyiko Paccattam veditabbo viññuhiti.

Sangha Vandana

Supati-panno Bhagavato sâvaka sangho, Ujupati-panno Bhagavato sâvaka sangho. Ñâya-patipanno Bhagavato sâvaka sangho. Sâmici-patipanno Bhagavato sâvaka sangho Yadidam cattâri purisa yugâni attha-purisa-puggalâ Esa Bhagavato sâvaka sangho. Âhu-neyyo, pâhu-neyyo, Dakkhi-neyyo,añjalikaraniyo, anuttaram puññakkhetam

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First Words of the Buddha:

“Anekajāti
saṃsāraṃ
Sandhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ;
Gahakāraṃ gavesanto,
Dukkha jāti punappunaṃ.
Gahakāraka diṭṭhosi,
Puna gehaṃ na kāhasi;
Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā,
Gahakūṭaṃ visaṅkhataṃ;
Visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ,
Taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.”

Translation:

"Through many births I have wandered in saṃsāra, Seeking the builder of this house (body) and not finding him; Painful is repeated birth again and again.

O house-builder! You are seen! You will not build this house again. All your rafters are broken; The ridgepole is shattered. My mind has attained the unconditioned; I have achieved the end of craving."

Significance:

"House-builder" refers to craving (taṇhā), the force that drives beings through cycles of birth and death (saṃsāra).

The Buddha declared that by eradicating craving, He had destroyed the conditions for future rebirth, achieving Nibbāna. These words symbolize the complete liberation from suffering and the attainment of supreme peace. This declaration marks the Buddha's awakening to the Four Noble Truths and the cessation of suffering through the Noble Eightfold Path.

Preface by the Author

The journey of "Custodians of the Buddha’s Sacred Relics" began with a simple yet profound vision: to illuminate the timeless legacy of the Buddha through the sacred relics and stupas that continue to inspire devotion and reverence across the world. As a custodian of sacred relics, I have been privileged to delve into their history, significance, and spiritual essence. This book seeks to bridge the ancient wisdom of the Buddha with modern-day understanding, offering readers an opportunity to reflect on the impermanence and interconnectedness of all things. I am deeply honored to share this work with you and hope it inspires greater compassion and mindfulness.

With Metta,

Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahāpālaka

The Buddha's Contemplation Following His First Words

After proclaiming his profound realization, the Buddha remained seated in meditation under the Bodhi Tree for seven weeks (49 days) in a state of deep gratitude and reflection. These weeks are marked by significant events, known as the *Sattasattāha*—seven periods of seven days each.

The Seven Weeks Under the Bodhi Tree

1. **First Week (Under the Bodhi Tree):**
   The Buddha remained seated in deep meditation, experiencing the bliss of liberation (

   vimutti sukha). He contemplated the dependent origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda)—how ignorance (avijjā) leads to suffering and how the cessation of ignorance leads to liberation.

2. **Second Week (The Animisa Cetiya):**
   The Buddha stood gazing at the Bodhi Tree without blinking for an entire week as a gesture of gratitude and reverence for the tree that had sheltered him.

3. **Third Week (The Jewelled Walkway):**
   The Buddha walked back and forth along a jewelled path that appeared miraculously, reflecting on the Dhamma he had realized and how he would convey it to the world.

4. **Fourth Week (The Golden Pavilion):**
   The Buddha sat inside a golden pavilion, contemplating the Abhidhamma (the higher teachings), gaining deeper insights into the nature of mind and phenomena.

5. **Fifth Week (Under the Ajapāla Banyan Tree):**
   A brahmin approached and asked who the Buddha was. The Buddha responded:

   "I am the one who has overcome all. I know all things. I am free from all defilements. I have abandoned all cravings and attained full liberation."
   During this week, the Buddha also overcame the temptation of Māra , the embodiment of death and desire, who tried to disrupt his peace.

6. **Sixth Week (Under the Mucalinda Tree):**
   Heavy rain fell, and the Naga King Mucalinda emerged to coil around the Buddha and shield him with his hood. This symbolizes the protective nature of wisdom and the Buddha's serenity in the face of adversity.

7. **Seventh Week (Under the Rājāyatana Tree):**
   The Buddha was approached by two merchants,Tapussa and Bhallika , who became the first lay disciples by offering rice cakes and honey. The Buddha gave them the first teaching, the Refuge in the Triple Gem (Tisarana) —the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.

The Buddha's Decision to Teach

Initially, the Buddha was reluctant to teach, thinking that the profound truths of Enlightenment might be difficult for others to understand. However, *Brahmā Sahampati*, the deity of compassion, appeared and pleaded with the Buddha, saying:

"There are beings with little dust in their eyes who will understand the Dhamma. Please teach for the welfare of the world."

Moved by this request, the Buddha decided to spread the Dhamma out of boundless compassion for all beings.

The First Teaching (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta)

The Buddha’s first sermon was delivered at the Deer Park in Isipatana (Sarnath) to five ascetics:

1. Kondañña
2. Bhaddiya
3. Vappa
4. Mahānāma
5. Assaji

This discourse, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion)*, introduced the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Life of the Buddha – From Birth to Parinirvana

- ### Birth of Siddhartha Gautama

Siddhartha Gautama, who would become known as the Buddha, was born in 563 BCE in Lumbini, a serene grove located in present-day Nepal. His father, King Suddhodana, was the ruler of the Shakya clan, while his mother, Queen Maya, was revered for her grace and piety. According to tradition, Queen Maya dreamt of a white elephant entering her womb—a divine sign that foretold the birth of a great leader. On the full moon day of Vesak, Queen Maya gave birth while resting under a sal tree. Legends recount that the newborn Siddhartha took seven steps and declared, "I am born for enlightenment." The birth of Siddhartha was celebrated throughout the Shakya kingdom, but a prophecy soon changed the atmosphere. A wise sage, Asita, predicted that the prince would either become a universal monarch or a spiritual teacher who would free humanity from suffering.

1.2 The Four Sights and the Great Renunciation

Siddhartha grew up surrounded by luxury in the royal palace of Kapilavastu. His father sought to shield him from the harsh realities of the world, providing him with every comfort to ensure that he embraced a future as a powerful king. However, despite his sheltered upbringing, curiosity began to grow in the young prince's heart. At the age of 29, during an excursion outside the palace walls, Siddhartha encountered four sights that would change the course of his life: an old man, a sick person, a corpse, and a serene monk.

These encounters revealed the inescapable truths of aging, illness, death, and the possibility of liberation through renunciation. Siddhartha realized that material wealth and power could not prevent suffering. Driven by a profound sense of compassion and purpose, Siddhartha left his princely life behind. On a quiet night, he bade farewell to his wife, Yasodhara, and his newborn son, Rahula. Clad in simple robes and carrying only a begging bowl, he began his journey as an ascetic in search of ultimate truth.

1.3 The Path to Enlightenment

For six arduous years, Siddhartha practiced extreme asceticism alongside other renunciants. He subjected himself to harsh self-discipline, fasting until his body grew frail. Yet, despite his rigorous efforts, enlightenment eluded him. Siddhartha came to understand that self-mortification was not the path to liberation. One day, after accepting a simple meal from a village girl named Sujata, Siddhartha seated himself beneath a bodhi tree near the river Neranjara in Bodh Gaya. Vowing not to rise until he had attained enlightenment, he entered deep meditation. During the night, he was confronted by Mara, the embodiment of desire and fear, who attempted to distract him with illusions and threats. Siddhartha remained unmoved. As dawn broke, Siddhartha attained complete understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. He became the Buddha—the "Awakened One." The bodhi tree under which he meditated became a symbol of his spiritual triumph.

1.4 The Buddha's Teachings and Mission

Following his enlightenment, the Buddha spent the next 45 years traveling across ancient India, sharing his insights with people from all walks of life. His first sermon, known as the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, was delivered in Sarnath to a group of five ascetics who had previously accompanied him. This sermon introduced the Four Noble Truths and set in motion the wheel of Dhamma. The Buddha's teachings emphasized compassion, mindfulness, and the middle path—a balanced approach that avoids both indulgence and extreme asceticism. He established a monastic community, the Sangha, which grew to include both monks and lay followers. Through his teachings, countless individuals found solace and purpose.

1.5 The Parinirvana at Kushinagar

At the age of 80, the Buddha sensed that his physical body was nearing the end of its life. He informed his disciples that he would soon attain parinirvana—the final passing beyond the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Accompanied by his faithful disciple Ananda, the Buddha journeyed to Kushinagar, where he rested in a grove of sal trees. In his final discourse, the Buddha reminded his followers to be diligent and seek refuge in their practice, saying, "All conditioned things are impermanent. Strive on with diligence."

On a peaceful full moon night, the Buddha lay on his right side, entered deep meditation, and passed into parinirvana. The Malla kings of Kushinagar prepared a grand cremation for the Buddha's body. After the cremation, the Buddha's sacred relics—including teeth, bones, and ashes—were collected and revered as tangible symbols of his legacy. Eight portions of these relics were distributed among the kingdoms, leading to the construction of the earliest stupas to house and honor these sacred remains. The Buddha's life journey, from prince to enlightened teacher, remains a profound source of inspiration. His teachings and relics continue to remind humanity of the path to liberation, encouraging compassion, wisdom, and mindfulness.

2. The Distribution of Buddha's Relics and the Formation of Stupas

2.1 The Division of Relics

After the Buddha's Passing Following the Buddha's parinirvana at Kushinagar, his body was cremated amidst deep reverence. The sacred relics—his teeth, bones, and ashes—became treasured symbols of his enduring spiritual legacy. Disputes arose among the surrounding kingdoms, each seeking a portion of these sacred remains to honor the Enlightened One. A respected Brahmin named Drona mediated the conflict and proposed that the relics be divided into eight parts. The Malla kings of Kushinagar, the Licchavis of Vaishali, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, and other rulers each received a portion of the relics. These relics were then enshrined in monumental stupas, marking the beginning of a tradition that would spread across the Buddhist world.

2.2 The Eight Original Stupas

The eight original stupas built to house the Buddha's relics became revered pilgrimage sites. Each of these stupas symbolized the Buddha's continued presence and the spread of his teachings. The notable locations included: - Rajagriha: A site significant for its association with early Buddhist councils. - Vaishali: Revered as a place where the Buddha frequently taught. - Kapilavastu: The hometown of Siddhartha Gautama, where he renounced his princely life. - Kushinagar: The site of the Buddha's passing and cremation. These early stupas were simple earthen mounds but held immense spiritual significance for the early Buddhist community.

2.3 Emperor Ashoka's Contribution

The most significant expansion of relic distribution came during the reign of Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. A devout convert to Buddhism after the devastating Kalinga War, Ashoka became determined to spread the Buddha's teachings far and wide. He ordered the construction of 84,000 stupas across his vast empire and redistributed the Buddha's relics from the original stupas to new locations. Some of the most famous stupas built or enhanced during Ashoka's reign include: - The Dharmarajika Stupa at Taxila, Pakistan. - The Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh, India. - The Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya, Bihar. Ashoka's inscriptions on pillars and rocks throughout his empire emphasize his commitment to Dhamma and non-violence. His efforts helped establish stupas as lasting symbols of devotion and meditation.

2.4 The Evolution of Stupa Design

Over time, the architectural design of stupas evolved into intricate forms that symbolized the Buddhist path to enlightenment. The hemispherical dome (anda) represented the universe and the Buddha's wisdom. The square platform at the top (harmika) symbolized the Dharma, while the central pillar (yasti) represented the connection between heaven and earth. Notable elements of stupa design include:

- The Torana (gateway): Decorated with carvings depicting scenes from the Buddha's life and Jataka tales.

- The Vedika (fence): Symbolizing the sacred boundary between the spiritual and material worlds. The construction of stupas also became a form of merit-making for rulers and devotees, reinforcing the community's collective spiritual goals.

2.5 The Spiritual and Cultural Legacy of Stupas

Stupas became more than reliquaries—they transformed into places of meditation, learning, and communal worship. Pilgrims traveled great distances to pay homage, circumambulating the stupas as an expression of reverence. The tradition of building stupas spread beyond India to regions such as Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. In each region, stupas took on unique architectural forms while retaining their symbolic core. The enduring legacy of the Buddha's relics and stupas reflects the universal appeal of his teachings on compassion and liberation. These sacred monuments continue to inspire devotion and serve as reminders of the Buddha's timeless message: that liberation is possible for all beings who walk the path with mindfulness and diligence.

3. Relics of the Buddha: Symbolism and Preservation

3.1 Types of Relics

Buddha relics (*dhātu*) are classified into three categories:

- **Corporeal relics**: Bones, teeth, and hair.
- **Contact relics** (*paribhogika*): Objects used by the Buddha, such as robes and bowls.
- **Dharmic relics** (*dhammadhātu*): Scriptures containing the Buddha's teachings .

3.2 Symbolic Function of Relics

The corporeal relics of the Buddha were considered tangible manifestations of his presence, serving as objects of veneration and sources of merit for devotees. Inscriptions often describe relics as "fields of merit" (*punya kshetra*), reinforcing their role in accumulating spiritual merit through offerings and pilgrimage .

3.3 Preservation and Repatriation Debates

The question of where Buddha relics should reside—within religious institutions or in museums—is a subject of ongoing debate. Institutions such as the British Museum house numerous relics excavated by 19th-century archaeologists like Charles Masson, raising ethical concerns about colonial-era acquisitions and modern repatriation efforts .

4. Historical Development of Stupa Architecture and Symbolism

4.1 Pre-Mauryan Burial Mounds and Proto-Stupas

The earliest form of the stupa can be traced back to prehistoric burial mounds known as *tumuli*, which served as repositories for cremated remains. These proto-stupas, typically constructed from earth and stone, symbolized the reverence for deceased ancestors and laid the foundation for later Buddhist practices. The mounds' hemispherical shape prefigured the later *anda* or dome of Buddhist stupas .

4.2 The Ashokan Revolution in Stupa Construction

The 3rd century BCE marked a significant transformation in stupa architecture under Emperor Ashoka's patronage. Following his conversion to Buddhism, Ashoka commissioned the construction of numerous stupas, each enshrining relics of the Buddha as a means of reinforcing the spread of *Dhamma* across his empire . Ashokan stupas, such as the Dharmarajika and Sanchi stupas, introduced key architectural features, including the stone enclosure (*vedika*), circumambulatory path (*pradakshina patha*), and the harmika, which signified the sacred boundary between the earthly and celestial realms.

Ashoka's inscriptions provide invaluable insights into the spiritual and political motives behind stupa construction. His *Minor Rock Edicts* emphasize the importance of pilgrimage to stupa sites and the moral obligations of rulers to preserve these monuments .

4.3 The Kushan and Gandhāran Influence

The Kushan dynasty (1st–3rd centuries CE) significantly influenced the design and cultural significance of stupas in the Gandhāra region. Kushan rulers, particularly Kanishka, embraced Buddhist iconography and introduced Indo-Greek artistic elements to stupa reliefs. The Bimaran gold casket, discovered by Charles Masson, exemplifies the fusion of Hellenistic and Indian artistic traditions, depicting the Buddha in human form alongside Brahma and Indra .

Gandhāran stupas were often encased with narrative friezes that depicted the life of the Buddha and scenes from *Jataka* tales. The Bimaran reliquary, dated to the 1st century CE, is considered one of the earliest depictions of the anthropomorphic Buddha, highlighting the region's role in the shift from aniconic to iconic representations .

4.4 Stupa Architecture in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia

In Sri Lanka, stupas such as the Ruwanwelisaya and Mahiyangana developed distinct architectural styles characterized by bell-shaped domes and towering spires (*kota*). The arrival of the Buddha's collarbone relic and the establishment of the Thuparama Stupa (3rd century BCE) underscored the central role of relics in Sri Lankan statecraft and religious life .

Similarly, stupas in Southeast Asia, particularly at Borobudur in Indonesia, demonstrate intricate reliefs and multi-tiered platforms symbolizing the Buddhist cosmological ascent. These structures further highlight the diffusion of stupa symbolism across Buddhist regions .

5.Stupas Enshrining the Buddha's Tooth Relics

After the Most Venerable Lord Buddha attained Mahāparinibbāna, his remaining sacred relics were cremated on a sandalwood pyre by the noble Saṅgha, led by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, with the presence of deities and Brahmas. The remaining sacred Tooth Relics, Teeth, Hair Relics, and Bone Relics of the Buddha were venerated by ancient kings of the Indian subcontinent, who built stupas as sites of reverence.

The notable stupas enshrining the sacred Tooth Relics in the Indian subcontinent are:

- **Dhamma Rājika Stupa** (by Emperor Ashoka)
- **Manikala Stupa** (by King Kanishka)
- **Stupa No. 2 (Bimaran)** (by King Mujatria)
- **Stupa No. 10 (Hadda)** (by an unknown king)
- **Jamalgarhi Stupa** (successive Kushan rulers)
- **Ahi Posh Stupa** (by King Kanishka)
- **Nagajunakonda Stupa** (by King Gautama Putra Satakarni)
- **Rukhuna Stupa (Avanti region)** (by King Vijaya Mitra)
- **Shinkort Stupa (Avanti region)** (by King Milinda)

  Dir Museum Stupa
- **Kundala Stupa (Sirkap, Punjab, Pakistan)** (by Prince Kundala, son of Emperor Ashoka)
- **Siha Nāda Stupa (Mauga City)** (by King Kumariya)
- **Kanishka Stupa (Peshawar City)** (by King Kanishka)
- **Takht-i-Bahi Royal Platform Stupa (Mardan City)**(by King Kozula Kapisa)

- **Bhaggara Stupa (Mangala City)** (by Emperor Ashoka)
- **Sakka Vagunti Stupa (Hadda City, Eastern Afghanistan)** (by Queen Rajakuladevi, sister of King Sadhuma)
- **Singaṭa Stupa (Swat Valley)** (by King Uttara Sena)
- **Namogana Stupa (Sindhuthāri Stupa)** (by King Suvithakka)
- **Sri Danta Mālīgāwa Monastery (Kandy City)** (Sri Lanka)
- The Sanchi Stupa (Madhya Pradesh, India)
- The Amaravati Stupa (Andhra Pradesh, India)
- The Ramagrama Stupa (Nepal)
- T**he Kamari Stupa near Kabul (The Broken Front Tooth Relic)**

  Dysentery (Blood Diarrhea) and the Buddha's Sacred Blood Relics

These stupas stand as sacred monuments dedicated to preserving and venerating the Buddha's Tooth Relics, serving as spiritual landmarks across regions.

6.Sacred Relics and Rituals of Veneration

6.1 The Concept of Relics in Buddhist Tradition

Relics (*dhātu*) hold a central place in Buddhist devotion, symbolizing the enduring presence of the Buddha in the world. The veneration of relics, recorded in canonical texts such as the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, began immediately after the Buddha's death. The cremated remains of the Buddha were divided into eight portions and distributed among the major clans and rulers of ancient India, who enshrined these sacred relics in stupas .

Buddhist relics are broadly categorized into three types:

- **Corporeal Relics (*saririka-dhātu*)**: Physical remains of the Buddha, such as bones, teeth, hair, and ashes.
- **Contact Relics (*paribhogika-dhātu*)**: Objects used by the Buddha, such as his alms bowl and robes.
- **Dharmic Relics (*dhammadhātu*)**: The Buddha's teachings, encapsulated in sacred texts and scriptures .

These relics are considered sources of spiritual merit and are believed to radiate the Buddha's divine energy, inspiring faith and reverence among devotees. The symbolic presence of the Buddha through his relics also reinforced the socio-political power of rulers who became custodians of these sacred objects .

6.2 The Role of Relic Stupas in Early Buddhist Practice

Stupas enshrining relics became pilgrimage sites where devotees could cultivate spiritual merit (*punya*) through acts of devotion, such as circumambulation (*pradakshina*), offering garlands, and reciting prayers. The ritual of walking clockwise around the stupa represents the cosmic order and reflects the path of mindfulness and right action described in the Eightfold Path .

The construction of relic stupas also served to reaffirm Buddhist teachings during periods of uncertainty or decline. By housing relics, stupas acted as physical manifestations of the Buddha's teachings, reinforcing communal identity and providing a sense of spiritual continuity across generations.

6.3 Symbolism of Relics and Rituals of Veneration

Relics were not merely memorial artifacts; they embodied the Buddha's enlightened mind and eternal wisdom. Key symbolic elements of relic veneration include:

- **Circumambulation**: A ritual act of walking around the stupa three times to symbolize respect for the Three Jewels (*Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha*).
- **Votive Offerings**: Devotees often place miniature stupas (*votive chaityas*), flowers, incense, and lamps as acts of reverence and gratitude. The donation of votive stupas is mentioned in the inscriptions found at Sanchi, Amaravati, and Anuradhapura .

- **Consecration Rituals**: In Tibetan and Indo-Tibetan traditions, consecration ceremonies (*rab gnas*) involve elaborate rites to empower the stupa and invoke blessings. This ritual often includes the recitation of mantras and the deposition of *dharanis* (sacred verses), alongside corporeal relics .

7.Dharmarajika Stupa (Dharmarajika: The Great Stupa of Taxila)

1. Introduction

The **Dharmarajika Stupa** is located in **Taxila, Pakistan**, one of the most renowned Buddhist archaeological sites in **South Asia**. Built by **Emperor Ashoka** in the **3rd century BCE**, it is one of the earliest Buddhist stupas associated with the **spread of Buddhism** during the **Mauryan Empire**. The name "Dharmarajika" translates to "the relic stupa of the King of Dharma (Ashoka)." It was built to enshrine sacred relics of **Lord Buddha**.

This article is based on **"Appropriating the Past" by Geoffrey Scarre and Robin Coningham (2013)** and references historical studies conducted by **Sir John Marshall (1913)** and **UNESCO reports**.

2. Details of the Relics

The stupa was initially built to house sacred relics, believed to include a **tooth relic of the Buddha**.

Key Discoveries:

- **Relic Caskets**: Sir John Marshall's excavations in **1913** unearthed a **gold reliquary** inscribed in **Kharosthi script** with the phrase **"Nausiru-Satka Danta"** (interpreted as "Buddha's sacred tooth relic").
- **Bone Fragments**: In **1934**, excavators discovered **human bone fragments** near the southern entrance of the stupa. These remains were later associated with **monks executed during the White Huns' invasion**.
- **Sacred Tooth Relic**: The stupa's inscriptions and structure align with traditions of relic veneration, especially those related to **the dispersal of relics from the Buddha's cremation site in Kushinagar**.

Modern Ceremonial Usage:

In **2016**, two tooth relics from the Dharmarajika Stupa were transported to **Sri Lanka** for a **one-month-long festival**. These relics were venerated in **Polonnaruwa**, **Colombo**, **Kandy**, and **Anuradhapura**. The event attracted an estimated **9.3 million devotees** across the country.

3. Cultural and Religious Significance

The **Dharmarajika Stupa** is significant for its connection to **Emperor Ashoka's patronage** of Buddhism and the **spread of Buddhist teachings**:

- **Symbol of Imperial Piety**: Ashoka constructed stupas across his empire to enshrine Buddha's relics, symbolizing his devotion and the sanctity of the Buddha's teachings.
- **Pilgrimage Site**: The site became a major pilgrimage center, with Buddhist monks and devotees from across **Gandhara, Central Asia**, and **China** visiting the stupa.
- **Relic Festivals**: Even today, the relics of the Buddha continue to be objects of profound veneration, with ritual processions and international relic tours reinforcing their significance.

4. Architectural Features

The **Dharmarajika Stupa** exemplifies early **Gandharan Buddhist architecture**:

- **Main Stupa**: Constructed with a hemispherical dome placed on a high drum, surrounded by a **processional path**.
- **Monastic Complex**: Consisted of **monks' cells, assembly halls, and smaller stupas**.
- **Stone and Stucco Reliefs**: Decorated with sculptures depicting **Buddha's life** and **Jataka tales**.

5. Comparative Analysis: Similar Sites

The Dharmarajika Stupa shares architectural and religious elements with other significant stupas:

Stupa Name	Location	Associated Relic	Historical Significance
Sanchi Stupa	Madhya Pradesh, India	Ashes of the Buddha	Built by Ashoka, featuring symbolic carvings.
Kanishka Stupa	Peshawar, Pakistan	Buddha's Relic Caskets	Constructed by **Emperor Kanishka**, famous for its height and grandeur.
Mahathupa (Ruwanwelisaya)	Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka	Buddha's relics	A grand stupa symbolizing Sri Lankan royal patronage.

6. Summarize findings of the research

The original sponsor of this stupa was Emperor Ashoka during the Third Buddhist Council. Later, King Kanishka reconstructed the stupa, enshrining the Buddha's Tooth Relic and establishing the stupa as a revered site. He also built monasteries and donated to the Saṅgha.

In **1913**, Sir John Marshall rediscovered the Dhamma Rājika Stupa. However, before this rediscovery, the stupa had been looted multiple times and severely damaged. In **1934**, human skeletal remains were found near the southern entrance of the stupa, identified as the remains of Saṅgha members who were massacred during the invasions of the White Huns.

Inside the stupa, Sir John Marshall found a golden casket engraved with Kharosthi script, which contained a silver reliquary inscribed with the words *"Nāgasena Relic of the Tooth"* (Danta). The inscription and the relic highlighted its importance as a sacred repository for the Buddha's Tooth Relic.

In **78 CE**, the temple at Dhamma Rājika continued to be a prominent site for veneration of the Buddha's relics. In **2016**, two sacred Tooth Relics from this stupa were sent to Sri Lanka for a month-long religious display, where they were honored at famous temples in **Polonnaruwa, Colombo, Kandy, and Anuradhapura**.

During the public veneration in Sri Lanka, approximately **9.3 million devotees** visited to pay homage and make offerings.

In reports sent by Sir John Marshall to the British government, the relic was identified not as ordinary bones but as the Tooth Relic of the Buddha. Unfortunately, due to an excavation error, the golden reliquary was damaged, and the Tooth Relic was fractured. This incident was noted in the remarks of the historian **Erriton**.

This historical stupa remains a testament to the deep reverence for the Buddha's sacred relics and the enduring faith of Buddhist devotees across regions.

The **Dharmarajika Stupa** remains a profound symbol of Buddhist devotion, representing the spiritual and political influence of **Emperor Ashoka**. Despite destruction during the **White Huns' invasion**, the legacy of the stupa and its sacred relics continues to inspire reverence. Its historical and architectural significance underscores its role as a cornerstone in the narrative of **Gandharan Buddhism** and its spread across **Asia**.

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8.Manikyala Stupa: A Testament to Buddhist Compassion

1. Historical Background

The Manikyala Stupa, located near Tope Mankiala in Punjab, Pakistan, is a remarkable Buddhist monument that exemplifies the values of self-sacrifice and charity central to the Buddhist faith. The stupa's origins trace back to the Kushan period, and according to legend, it was constructed by King Kanishka I between 128 and 151 CE.

This stupa is closely linked to the *Vyaghrī Jataka* (the Tigress Jataka), which recounts how Prince Sattva, in a past life of the Buddha, sacrificed his body to feed a starving tigress and her cubs. Burmese records emphasize this connection, with references to the bodhisattva's unparalleled compassion.

" ဘု ရ ား သ ခ ေါ် အ လေ ာ သ တ င် တ ဝ မ သ ား သ မ ဂ ိ ဂ ီ ဋ္ဌ ေ စ တ ီ မ ေါ် ရ လေ ား အ သ ူ ့ အ သ က ို ပေ ား ခ ဲ ့ သ ..."

(Translation: "The bodhisattva prince offered his body to the tigress to save the lives of her cubs, demonstrating supreme charity.")

European documentation of the stupa began in 1808 with Mountstuart Elphinstone's observations, which were later detailed in his book *Kingdom of Caubul* (1815). Subsequently, Jean-Baptiste Ventura, an Italian general in Ranjit Singh's service, excavated the stupa in 1830, uncovering significant relics at a depth of 10 to 20 meters. However, the site suffered from further damage due to treasure hunters over the centuries.

2. Relics Enshrined

The Manikyala Stupa has yielded several noteworthy relics that have enriched our understanding of ancient Buddhist practices. Key findings include:

- **Bone fragments**: Early excavations revealed charred bones believed to be symbolic offerings rather than cremated remains of the Buddha.
- **Gold and silver reliquaries**: Ventura unearthed intricately crafted reliquary caskets, possibly used to enshrine sacred remains. Some inscriptions on these reliquaries were written in Kharosthi, connecting them to the Kushan period.
- **Teeth fragments**: Historical records mention the discovery of small teeth relics, though their authenticity is debated.
- **Coins and jewelry**: Kushan-era coins bearing King Kanishka's image were found, alongside decorative ornaments.

The presence of these relics suggests the stupa was a center for significant Buddhist rituals and served as a pilgrimage site for devotees across Gandhara and beyond.

3. Archaeological Findings

The excavation led by Ventura in 1830 was one of the earliest systematic efforts to explore the Manikyala Stupa. Other important investigations include:

- **Reliquary findings**: Ventura's discovery of a series of caskets confirmed the existence of enshrinement chambers.
- **Carvings and votive stupas**: Additional relics included fragments of stone panels depicting scenes from the Buddha's life, highlighting Gandharan artistic influences.
- **Comparison with neighboring stupas**: Masson's records indicate structural similarities between the Manikyala Stupa and the stupas of Hadda and Wardak, suggesting a shared architectural tradition.

Despite its significance, the site was damaged due to unauthorized digging, leaving parts of the stupa's structure vulnerable to collapse.

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Efforts to restore and preserve the Manikyala Stupa have faced numerous hurdles:

- **Early British interest**: In the 19th century, British scholars, including James Prinsep, studied the artifacts retrieved from the site. However, some items were transferred to private collections, complicating preservation efforts.
- **Looting and erosion**: Continuous looting in the 20th century resulted in the loss of valuable relics. The stupa's upper dome suffered significant erosion due to exposure to the elements.
- **Modern interventions**: Recent initiatives led by local heritage organizations have attempted to stabilize the structure, though international collaboration remains essential for comprehensive conservation.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Manikyala Stupa holds profound religious importance due to its association with the *Vyaghrī Jataka*. The tale of Prince Sattva's selfless act serves as an enduring symbol of *dāna pāramī* (the perfection of giving). Buddhist pilgrims from across the region have historically performed circumambulation (*pradakshina*) around the stupa, offering prayers and flowers in remembrance of the Buddha's past sacrifice.

Additionally, the stupa reflects the Kushan Empire's role in fostering cross-cultural exchanges. The integration of Hellenistic artistic motifs with Buddhist themes in the stupa's carvings demonstrates Gandhara's unique position as a cultural crossroads along the Silk Road.

6. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other Kushan-era stupas, such as the Bimaran and Dharmarajika stupas, the Manikyala Stupa stands out for its connection to the *Vyaghrī Jataka* narrative. Unlike the solid dome of the Dharmarajika Stupa, the Manikyala structure incorporates a vertical shaft leading to a reliquary chamber, emphasizing its role in relic enshrinement practices.

7. Expanded Relic Summary Table for Manikyala Stupa

Type of Relic	**Details**
Bones	Charred bone fragments, likely symbolic offerings
Teeth	Mentioned in early records, authenticity debated
Ashes	Not documented
Coins	Kushan coins depicting King Kanishka I
Reliquaries	Gold and silver caskets with Kharosthi inscriptions

8. Main Research Findings on Manikyala Stupa

Historical accounts emphasize that the Manikyala Stupa was originally built to commemorate the Buddha's past life sacrifice. Ventura's findings confirmed that the stupa contained precious relics, possibly connected to a lineage of Buddhist monastic transmissions. However, due to negligent excavations and subsequent looting, several key artifacts were lost.

The Manikyala Stupa remains a critical site for understanding Gandharan Buddhism and serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring power of relic veneration in Buddhist culture.

The **Manikala Stupa** is a significant Buddhist stupa located near **Tope Mankiala Village** in the **Pothohar region of Punjab, Pakistan**. According to Jātaka stories, this site is where Prince **Sattva**, a former life of the Buddha, performed an extraordinary act of self-sacrifice. The prince, upon seeing a starving tigress about to devour her six cubs, offered his own body as sustenance to save their lives. This act of supreme generosity (Dānapāramī) is commemorated by this sacred stupa.

Construction History:

- It is believed that **King Kanishka** constructed the Manikala Stupa between **128 CE and 151 CE** to honor this Jātaka story.
- According to another legend, the stupa is one of the **84,000 stupas** built by **Emperor Ashoka**. It is said that King Kanishka discovered the ruins of an ancient stupa while on an expedition after hearing a tiger's roar, prompting him to rebuild the stupa as an offering to the Buddha.

Significance:

King Kanishka frequently visited the Manikala Stupa for veneration and made important decisions after consulting at this sacred site.

Rediscovery:

- The stupa was rediscovered in **1808** by **Mountstuart Elphinstone**, the first British envoy to Afghanistan. His findings were documented in his book *"Kingdom of Caubul"* (1815).
- In **1891**, the stupa was restored by order of **Queen Victoria**.

Excavation Discoveries:

- In **1830**, **Jean-Baptiste Ventura** discovered numerous relics 10 to 20 meters beneath the stupa, including reliquaries and offerings.
- Among the findings were sacred Tooth Relics of the Buddha, later acquired by renowned archaeologist **James Prinsep**. These relics are currently housed in the **British Museum** in the **King Edward VII Gallery**.

Present Condition:

- Due to past looting by treasure hunters, the entrance to the stupa now has a visible cavity.
- For security reasons, access around the site is restricted, and protective barriers have been installed to preserve the structure.

The Manikala Stupa stands as a lasting monument to the Buddha's profound teachings on compassion and self-sacrifice, revered by pilgrims and researchers alike.

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9. Bimaran Stupa No. 2: The Legacy of Mujatria

1. Historical Background

The Bimaran Stupa No. 2, located near Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan, is renowned for its famous reliquary, discovered by the British explorer Charles Masson during his archaeological surveys between 1833 and 1838. The stupa, considered one of the most significant Buddhist monuments, housed a reliquary containing sacred relics that exemplify the cultural and religious synthesis of Gandhara.

The Bimaran reliquary featured coins associated with Indo-Scythian King Azes II. However, scholars have debated whether the reference points to Azes II himself or his successor Mujatria, the son of Indo-Scythian king Kharahostes. This ambiguity has sparked scholarly interest and controversy, particularly regarding the reliquary's exact dating and patronage.

2. Relics Enshrined

The Bimaran Stupa housed some of the most debated Buddhist relics, which unfortunately disappeared over time. Key relics associated with the site include:

- **Buddha’s tooth and bone fragments**: The stupa’s primary relics were believed to be sacred remains of the Buddha. These relics were enshrined in a decorated reliquary.
- **Gold reliquary**: The Bimaran reliquary, now displayed at the British Museum’s Joseph E. Hotung Gallery, is an exquisitely designed casket adorned with depictions of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. It is one of the earliest known representations of the Buddha in human form.
- **Indo-Scythian coins**: The reliquary was accompanied by coins bearing the name Azes, which some scholars attribute to Mujatria, adding to the ongoing debate over the stupa's precise historical context.

Table of Key Relics Found at Bimaran Stupa No. 2

Type of Relic	Description
Bones	Believed to be the Buddha's relics, now lost
Teeth	Described in early records but missing from the collection
Gold reliquary	Decorated with engraved figures of the Buddha
Coins	Indo-Scythian coins attributed to Azes or Mujatria

3. Archaeological Findings

Charles Masson’s discovery of Bimaran Stupa No. 2 unveiled a significant chapter in the history of Buddhist art and relic veneration:

- **Decorated reliquary**: The golden reliquary was found in a sealed chamber. It features depictions of the seated Buddha flanked by two Bodhisattvas.
- **Inscriptions and dating**: Coins found with the reliquary bear inscriptions associated with Azes II. However, recent numismatic studies, such as those by Joe Cribb, suggest the coins could refer to Mujatria, highlighting the complexity of Gandhara's dynastic history.

The Bimaran reliquary represents the earliest human iconography of the Buddha, reflecting the transition from symbolic depictions (such as stupas and wheels) to anthropomorphic forms.

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The relics from the Bimaran Stupa have faced significant challenges:

- **Relic disappearance**: The Buddha's tooth and bone fragments were reportedly lost after their initial transfer to the British Museum, fueling debates about colonial-era handling of artifacts.
- **Conservation of the reliquary**: The Bimaran reliquary remains one of the most studied artifacts in Buddhist archaeology. It has been carefully preserved and is currently displayed in the Joseph E. Hotung Gallery at the British Museum.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Bimaran reliquary symbolizes the fusion of Greek, Indian, and Central Asian influences characteristic of Gandharan art. The depiction of the Buddha in human form marks a pivotal shift in Buddhist iconography and reflects the growing importance of relic worship during the Kushan period.

The stupa itself served as a center for pilgrimage, attracting devotees who venerated the sacred remains. The inclusion of coins in the relic chamber indicates the patronage of Indo-Scythian rulers, emphasizing the political and religious significance of relic enshrinement.

6. Comparative Analysis

Compared to other stupas, such as the Dharmarajika and Manikyala stupas, the Bimaran Stupa stands out for its richly adorned reliquary and early representation of the Buddha in human form. Unlike the simpler reliquaries of Dharmarajika, the Bimaran reliquary's craftsmanship suggests a high level of artistic and cultural exchange within Gandhara.

7. Summarize findings of the research

The **Bimaran Stupa** is a world-renowned Buddhist relic stupa located near **Jalalabad** in eastern Afghanistan. It is famously known for being the site where the **Bimaran Reliquary Casket** was discovered.

Discovery and Historical Context:

- The stupa was discovered by archaeologist **Charles Masson** between **1833 and 1838** during his archaeological explorations in Afghanistan.
- The reliquary casket found inside contained inscriptions referencing the **Indo-Scythian King Azes II**, but there is scholarly debate about the exact identity of the king. Some believe the inscriptions refer to **King Kharahostes** or his son **Mujatria** instead.

Controversies and Disputes:

- The dating of the **Bimaran Reliquary** remains a subject of scholarly dispute.
- The reliquary once held sacred **Tooth Relics** and **Bone Relics** of the Buddha. However, during its preservation at the **Kabul Museum**, these relics were lost, adding further controversy to its history.

Current Location:

- The **Bimaran Reliquary Casket** is currently displayed at the **British Museum** in the **Joseph E. Hotung Gallery**.
- Sadly, the original Buddha's Tooth and Bone Relics that were once inside the reliquary have been lost over time.

The Bimaran Stupa remains a significant historical and archaeological site, symbolizing the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia and highlighting the enduring legacy of ancient Buddhist kingdoms.

The Bimaran Stupa No. 2 remains a cornerstone of Buddhist heritage, illustrating the profound importance of relic veneration in Gandharan Buddhism. Despite the controversy surrounding the relics' provenance and disappearance, the golden reliquary continues to captivate scholars and devotees alike. The stupa serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of Buddhist faith and the cultural intersections that shaped the ancient world.

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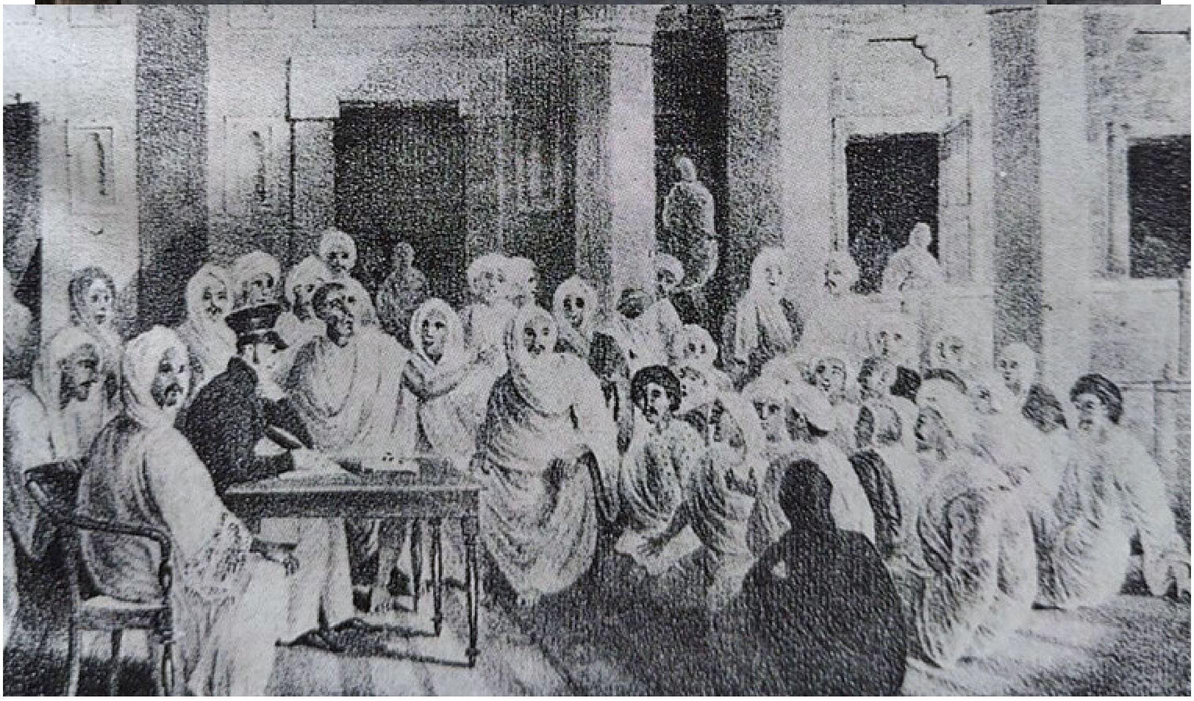

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10. Hadda Stupa No. 10 (Tope Kelan): The Great Stupa of Architectural Brilliance

1. Historical Background

Hadda Stupa No. 10, also known as *Tope Kelan* or the *Great Stupa*, stands out among the Buddhist monuments of Hadda due to its exceptional architectural craftsmanship. Hadda was a major Buddhist center located near Jalalabad in present-day Afghanistan, known for its intricately carved stucco sculptures and religious relics. This stupa is considered one of the finest examples of Gandharan artistry.

The initial discovery and documentation of Hadda Stupa No. 10 took place during Charles Masson's explorations between 1833 and 1838. Despite Masson's limited documentation of the relics, the site became notable for its underground relic chambers and the luxurious relic deposits within.

Tepe Maranjan Monastery

Close to the Hadda complex, the Tepe Maranjan site is believed to have housed a prominent Buddhist monastery dating from the 4th to 7th centuries CE. It featured multiple Buddha statues and inscribed tiles. French archaeologists Gérard Fussman and Jean Carl conducted further excavations in 1933, revealing its importance as a center of Buddhist worship.

2. Relics Enshrined

The relics discovered at Hadda Stupa No. 10 were among the most impressive in the Gandharan region. However, records indicate that Masson did not fully document all the relics. Key relics include:

- **Tooth relics and bones**: Though mentioned in descriptions, specific details about these sacred remains were not preserved in official records.
- **Golden reliquaries**: Several caskets were found containing sacred relics, adorned with precious stones.
- **Coins and tiles**: Artifacts discovered included coins bearing the seals of Greek emperors such as Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE), Marcian (r. 450–457 CE), and Leo I (r. 457–474 CE), indicating long-standing cultural exchanges between the West and Gandhara.

Table of Key Relics Found at Hadda Stupa No. 10

Type of Relic	Description
Teeth and bones	Alleged Buddha relics, though poorly documented
Gold reliquary	Caskets containing relics with intricate designs
Stucco figures	Numerous stucco sculptures depicting the Buddha and Bodhisattvas
Coins	Byzantine and Sasanian-era coins

3. Architectural Features

Hadda Stupa No. 10 is renowned for its unique underground reliquary chamber connected by cylindrical shafts. The chamber's ceiling was adorned with suspended bronze plates, giving it a resplendent appearance. The layout demonstrated a sophisticated design that allowed access to the relic chamber while symbolizing the sanctity of the sacred remains.

The stupa's structure included:

- **Cylindrical shafts**: Connecting the main stupa with the subterranean chamber.
- **Stucco carvings**: Decorated with finely sculpted figures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and celestial beings.
- **Bronze embellishments**: The chamber featured a massive bronze cauldron, believed to have held offerings.

Masson's descriptions evoke the sense of awe he felt, stating that he felt like a diver surrounded by treasure due to the wealth of artifacts within the chamber.

4. Archaeological Findings

The most significant findings at the Hadda complex include:

- **Stucco sculptures**: The stucco statues from Hadda are among the finest in Buddhist art, known for their detailed craftsmanship and lifelike expressions.
- **Tiles with inscriptions**: Excavations revealed tiles bearing inscriptions from the Sasanian era, associated with rulers such as Shapur II (r. 309–379 CE) and Ardashir II (r. 379–383 CE).
- **Tepe Maranjan**: Excavations conducted at Tepe Maranjan uncovered numerous Sasanian tiles but no relic caskets. The discovery of monastery remains suggests it was an active religious site until the 5th or 6th century CE.

5. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Hadda Stupa No. 10 has faced significant challenges due to political instability and looting:

- **Masson's incomplete records**: The lack of a complete inventory of relics led to uncertainty about the full extent of the findings.
- **Conflict-related destruction**: Hadda's archaeological sites suffered extensive damage during conflicts in the region, with many relics either lost or illegally exported.
- **Preservation efforts**: French archaeologists, in collaboration with the Afghan Institute of Archaeology, attempted to document and preserve the remaining sculptures and artifacts. However, ongoing conflicts have impeded comprehensive restoration.

6. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Great Stupa of Hadda embodies the grandeur of Buddhist art and devotion. Pilgrims visiting the site engaged in ritual circumambulation (*pradakshina*), making offerings and chanting prayers in reverence to the Buddha's relics.

The stucco sculptures from Hadda reflect a unique synthesis of Greek, Persian, and Indian artistic influences, showcasing the cultural interconnectedness of the Gandharan region.

7. Comparative Analysis

When compared to stupas such as the Bimaran and Dharmarajika stupas, Hadda Stupa No. 10 stands out for its stucco craftsmanship and complex underground chamber design. Unlike the simpler stupa forms found in Taxila, the Hadda stupas were characterized by their elaborate sculptural adornments and advanced architectural layouts.

8. Summarize findings of the research

Stupa No. 10, known as **Tope Kelan** or "The Great Stupa," is celebrated for its exceptional architectural craftsmanship. The **Darunta Stupa** is considered unparalleled in its design, and the original stone statues and relic chambers within the stupa have been meticulously constructed with remarkable creativity.

Architectural Details:

- Inside the stupa lies a beautiful **slender-shaped well** connected by a corridor to an underground relic chamber. The interior contained greenish-golden earth and ashes.
- Upon descending into the relic chamber, a large **bronze vessel** was discovered, hanging by iron chains from the domed ceiling. This discovery further deepened the excitement and curiosity surrounding the site.

Relics and Discoveries:

- The Buddha's **Tooth Relics** were enshrined elegantly among various precious jewels. The sheer volume of treasures found gave the excavators the feeling of being like **divers swimming among rare artifacts**.
- Among the relics, inscriptions bearing the names of **Theodosius II**, **Marcian**, and **Leo**—Greek emperors who reigned from **408 AD to 474 AD**—were also found, indicating connections with distant empires.

Excavation History:

- The excavations were documented by **Charles Masson**, but he did not record a complete inventory of the discovered relics and treasures. As a result, the existence of certain relics, especially the **Tooth Relics**, became known to the authorities much later.
- The **Tepe Maranjan** monastery, not to be confused with the stupa, is located on the eastern foothills near **Kabul**. It is believed to have existed as a Buddhist monastery from the **4th to 7th centuries CE**. Numerous Buddha statues and clay tiles were found at this site, many of which were carved in stucco similar to the style of the **Fondukistan Monastery**.

Later Archaeological Investigations:

- French archaeologists **Gérard Fussman** and **Jean Carl** conducted excavations in **1933**, near the southern monasteries of **Jalalabad** and **Peshawar**. The site was located east of **King Nadir Shah's tomb**.
- In **1976**, additional studies were conducted by **Gérard Fussman** and **Zemaralaï Tarzi** from the Afghan Institute of Archaeology.
- The site revealed numerous tiles bearing the marks of **Sasanian rulers** such as **Shapur II** (309-379 AD) and **Ardashir II** (379-383 AD). However, despite the discovery of statues and decorative tiles, no relics or remains of sacred **Tooth Relics** were found.

Cultural Significance:

The discoveries at **Tepe Maranjan** and **Tope Kelan** provide invaluable insights into the interactions between Buddhist culture and neighboring empires. The exquisite relics and historical inscriptions continue to captivate historians, even though some treasures have been lost or remain unverified.

Hadda Stupa No. 10, or *Tope Kelan*, stands as a testament to the architectural and artistic ingenuity of ancient Gandhara. Despite the loss of many relics and artifacts, the site remains a symbol of Buddhist heritage and devotion. Continued archaeological efforts are crucial for preserving the remaining treasures and uncovering more about the religious and cultural practices of this historic site.

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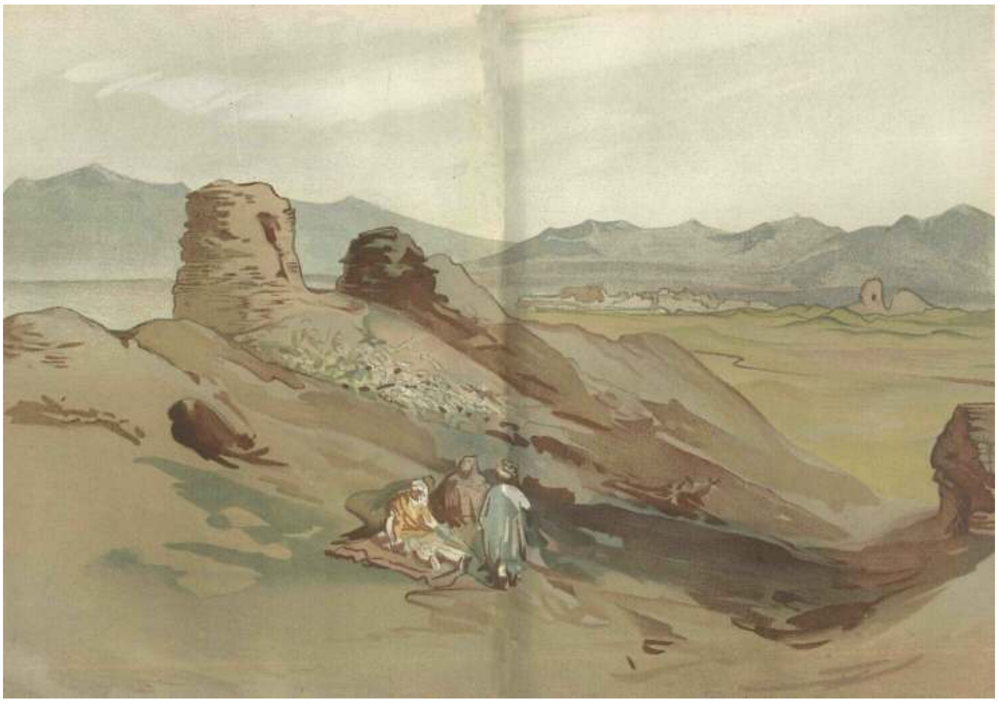

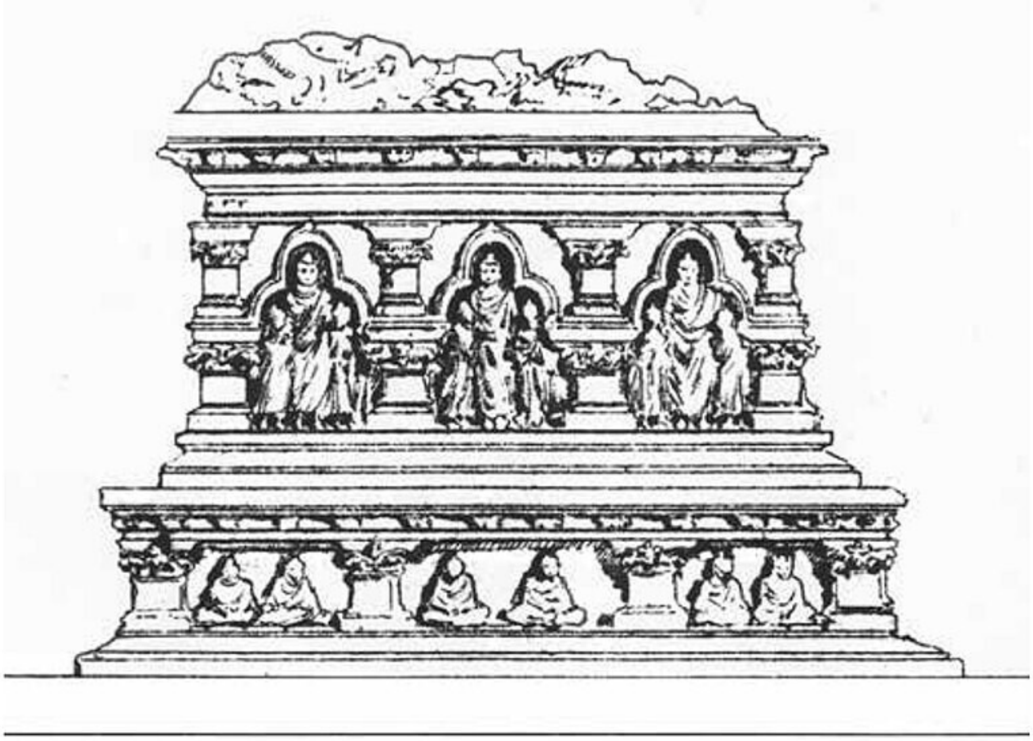

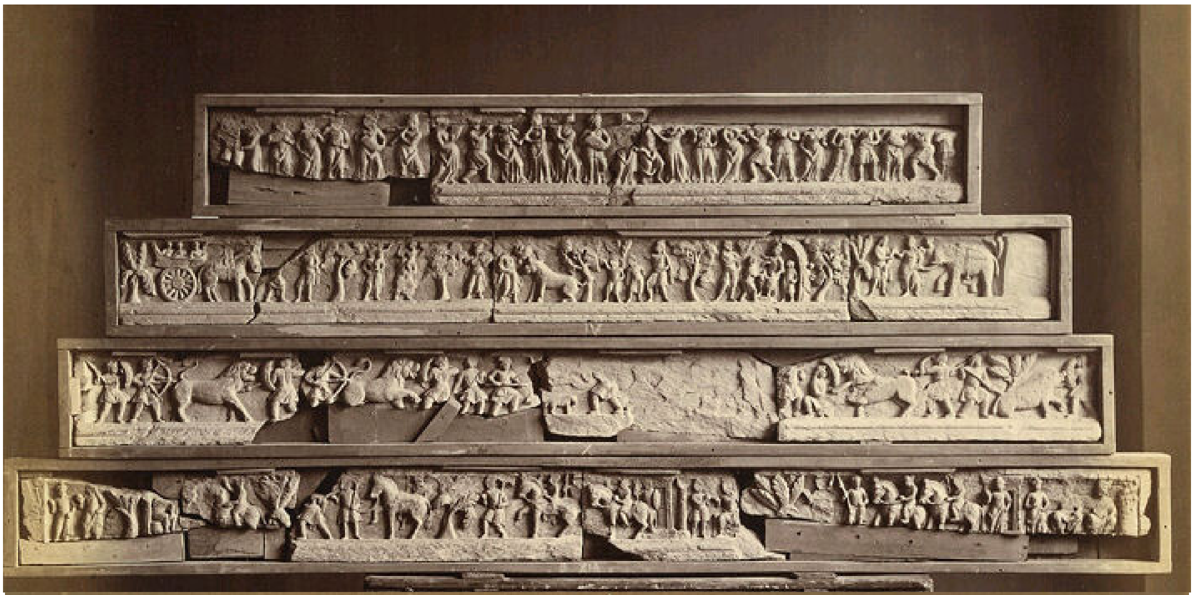

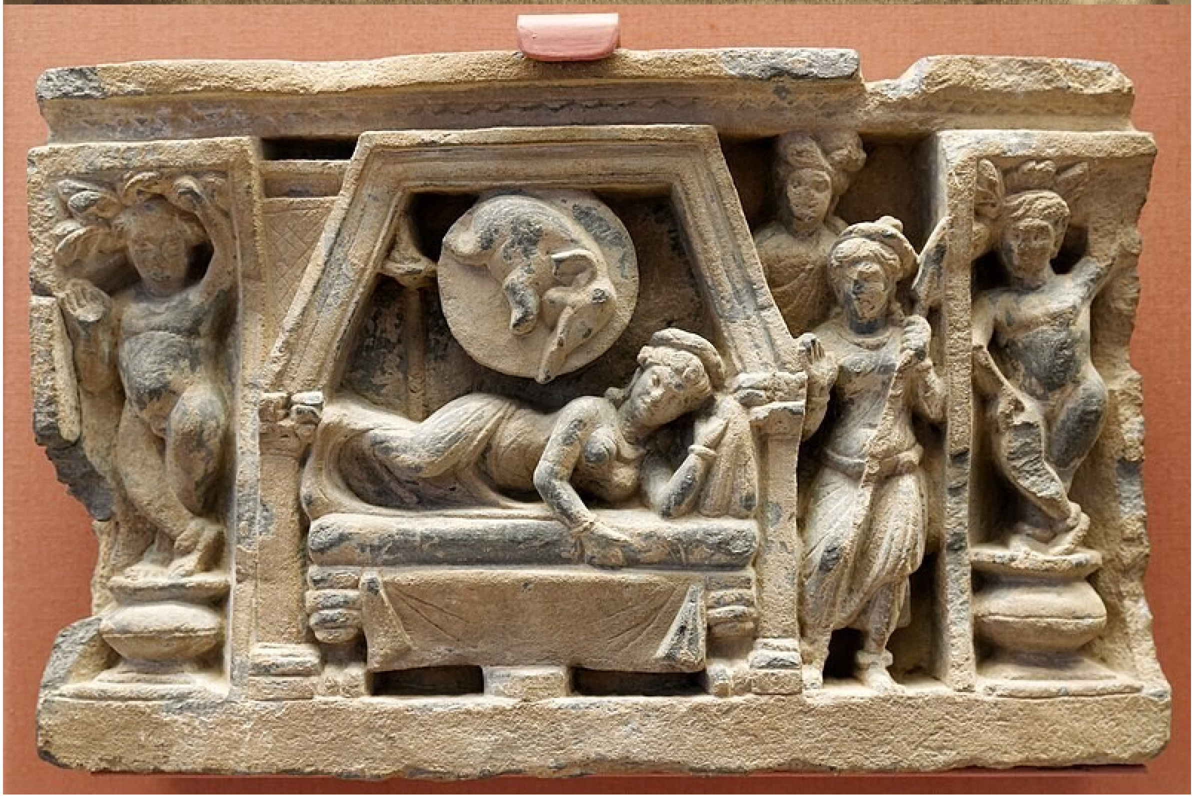

11. Jamālgarhī Monastery: A Center of Gandharan Buddhist Heritage

1. Historical Background

The Jamālgarhī Buddhist Monastery is an important archaeological site located in the Peshawar Valley, situated near the famed Buddhist complexes of Takht-i-Bahī and Sahrī Bahlol. Discovered in 1848 by Alexander Cunningham, this site holds historical significance as a center for Buddhist monastic life during the Kushan Empire.

In 1852, British officers Lieutenant Stokes and Major Lumsden conducted surveys and documented the site's stupas and sculptures. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) reports mention that Cunningham's initial findings included sacred relics believed to contain Buddha's teeth and bones, though their authenticity and description have been a source of debate. Excavations continued under Lieutenant A. Crompton in the 1870s, who unearthed significant portions of the monastic complex.

Subsequent archaeological campaigns, led by Harold Hargreaves between 1920 and 1923, contributed to the preservation and further exploration of the site. The ASI records from this period describe relic caskets, stucco sculptures, and inscribed tiles linked to the later Kushan rulers, such as Vasudeva I and the Kidarite Hun kings.

2. Relics Enshrined

The relics discovered at Jamālgarhī comprise various types of objects, reflecting the site's religious and cultural significance. Key items unearthed include:

- **Tooth and bone fragments**: Cunningham's reports mention sacred remains, though there are conflicting accounts of their discovery.
- **Gold plaques and reliquaries**: Inscriptions on the gold plaques reference Buddha's relics, though the exact details remain unclear.
- **Jewelry and ornaments**: Excavations yielded schist sculptures depicting guardians and Bodhisattvas adorned with jewels.
- **Coins**: Coins from later Kushan emperors, such as Vasudeva I, and Kidarite coins have been found, indicating continued patronage during the late Kushan period.

Table of Key Relics Found at Jamālgarhī

Type of Relic	**Description**
Teeth and bones	Alleged Buddha relics, though authenticity debated
Gold reliquaries	Caskets containing relics, inscribed with sacred texts
Jewelry and ornaments	Bejeweled tiaras and horse fittings
Coins	Kushan and Kidarite-era coins

3. Architectural Features

Jamālgarhī Monastery is celebrated for its unique architectural features and intricately carved sculptures. Key elements include:

- **Main stupa complex**: The primary stupa at Jamālgarhī was constructed with precision and featured a subterranean relic chamber connected by a staircase. Some of the chambers were elaborately decorated with friezes depicting scenes from the Buddha's life.
- **Monastic cells**: Surrounding the stupa were several monastic cells, courtyards, and assembly halls used by monks for meditation and communal gatherings.
- **Stone carvings**: Schist sculptures portraying the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and Vajrapani (a guardian figure) were found. One famous frieze from the site, known for its Hellenistic and Indian artistic fusion, depicts a standing Buddha flanked by a Vajrapani figure in classical drapery.

4. Archaeological Findings

Cunningham's team found several notable artifacts during their excavations:

- **Schist sculptures**: Thirteen prominent sculptures, including standing Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, were documented.
- **Inscriptions**: Two inscriptions were found in the complex. One stone inscription was discovered near "Court No. 7" and contained dedicatory verses in Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts.
- **Stucco sculptures and friezes**: These carvings depicted various scenes from the Buddha's life, including depictions of his renunciation and enlightenment.

Cunningham noted in his 1848 report that some relic caskets were described by local accounts but never fully inventoried. Lieutenant Stokes and Major Lumsden's records mention several caskets and relics sent to the Lahore Museum and the British Museum. Unfortunately, many of these artifacts were lost in the 1866 fire at the Crystal Palace exhibition in London.

5. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Jamālgarhī has faced numerous preservation challenges due to historical looting, poor documentation, and modern conflicts:

- **Loss of documentation**: The fire at the Crystal Palace destroyed many of Bayley's records and sketches, making it difficult to verify early discoveries.
- **Colonial dispersal**: Artifacts from the site were transported to museums in Lahore, Calcutta, and London, leading to disputes over ownership.
- **Conservation efforts**: The Pakistani government has undertaken conservation initiatives, but limited resources and environmental factors have hampered efforts.

6. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

Jamālgarhī served as a vital religious and educational center for Buddhist monks and scholars. The relics enshrined at the site were venerated by pilgrims, who performed ritual circumambulation (*pradakshina*) around the stupas. The sculptures and friezes demonstrate the blending of Greek, Indian, and Central Asian artistic influences, highlighting Gandhara's role as a crossroads of cultural exchange.

7. Comparative Analysis

Compared to other sites like Takht-i-Bahī and Sahrī Bahlol, Jamālgarhī is distinguished by its extensive monastic complex and the variety of relics discovered. While Takht-i-Bahī is known for its elevated architecture, Jamālgarhī's sculptures stand out for their artistic complexity, particularly the friezes depicting Vajrapani in Hellenistic form.

8. Summarize findings of the research

The **Jamālgarhi Buddhist Monastery and Stupa** is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the **Peshawar Valley**, located near other renowned sites such as **Takht-i-Bahī** and **Sahrī Bahlol**.

Discovery and Early Excavations:

- In **1848**, **Alexander Cunningham** discovered the Jamālgarhi site. Four years later, British officers **Lieutenant Stokes** and **Major Lumsden** conducted surveys and excavations (Bayley, 1852).
- In **1873**, Cunningham resumed excavations and documented his findings in the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**. **Lieutenant A. Crompton** expanded the excavations, uncovering the monastic complex, halls, and relic chambers (Crompton, 1974).
- The excavations aimed to recover sculptures and artifacts, which were largely sent to the **Lahore Museum**.

Key Archaeological Discoveries:

- Excavations between **1920 and 1923**, led by **Harold Hargreaves** under ASI, continued to preserve and document the site (Hargreaves, 1921-1924).
- Artifacts discovered included terracotta tiles, stone lamps, beads, rings, and numerous sculptures.
- Two **Kharosthi inscriptions** were found, one of which was located in Monastery No. 7 (Hargreaves, 1921: 4-6).

Relics and Sculptures:

Cunningham recorded that Buddha's Tooth Relics and bones were discovered and securely stored (Cunningham, 1848). However, he did not provide illustrations of the relics or the reliquaries. Stokes and Lumsden reported that no objects were found in the main stupa's relic chamber , leading to suspicions of hidden relics.

Unique Features of the Site:

- The relic chamber contained **golden chains**, leading to a central chamber believed to house sacred relics (Crompton, 1874).
- A **schist reliquary** with inscriptions about **Buddha's Tooth and bone relics** transported from **Kanishka's capital** was discovered near **Corridor B** and the **main stupa**.
- **Cunningham** noted that the **main stupa** had a smaller circular shrine within it, adorned with sculptures depicting scenes from Buddhist texts.

Controversies and Lost Records:

- Many relics and sculptures from the Jamālgarhi site were undocumented during early excavations. As a result, the exact provenance of some artifacts remains uncertain.
- The first collection of Jamālgarhi relics and paintings was sent to **Lahore Province Headquarters** by Cunningham. The collection included a **reliquary featuring a female guardian figure holding a spear** (now housed at **Chandigarh Museum**).
- In **1852**, **Bayley** sent sculptures to London for documentation and exhibitions. However, during the **1866 Crystal Palace Fire**, many records and paintings, including Bayley's sketches, were destroyed (Smith, 1889; Errington, 1987).

Current Locations of Artifacts:

- Jamālgarhi sculptures and relics are now dispersed across several museums, including:
  Lahore Museum (Pakistan)
  Peshawar Museum (Pakistan)
  Chandigarh Museum (India)
  Victoria and Albert Museum (UK)
  British Museum (UK)
- Two sculptures from **Sir Edward Clive Bayley's** collection are part of the **Gandhara Collection** at the British Museum (Errington, 1987: 89).

Ongoing Disputes and Research:

- There are ongoing debates about the ownership of Jamālgarhi artifacts between India, Pakistan, and the UK.
- Research efforts, led by scholars such as **Elizabeth Errington**, continue to trace the original locations and histories of the Buddha's Tooth Relics and sculptures from Jamālgarhi.

The **Jamālgarhi site** stands as a testament to Gandhara's artistic and spiritual heritage, though much of its historical legacy remains shrouded in mystery due to the destruction of records and the dispersal of artifacts across the globe.

The Jamālgarhī Buddhist Monastery remains a testament to Gandhara's rich cultural and religious heritage. The site's sacred relics, inscriptions, and sculptures provide valuable insights into the spread of Buddhism and the Kushan Empire's influence in the region. Continued archaeological research and preservation efforts are essential for safeguarding this historical treasure for future generations.

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12. Ahin Posh Stupa: A Kushan Legacy of Buddhist Relics

1. Historical Background

The Ahin Posh Stupa is an ancient Buddhist monument located near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Built around 150–160 CE by the Kushan Emperor Kanishka I, the site is notable for its intricate reliquary deposits and Roman-influenced artistic elements. The name *Ahin Posh*, derived from the Persian language, translates to "covered with iron" or "iron-clad place," referencing the site's fortified nature.

In February 1879, William Simpson initiated excavations at the site, uncovering significant archaeological finds. The stupa's central dome housed an impressive underground relic chamber accessible through a grand archway. Inside, Simpson discovered a seated Buddha statue adorned with intricate floral patterns, reflecting Persian and Roman artistic influences.

2. Relics Enshrined

The Ahin Posh Stupa contained an elaborate collection of relics, including sacred remains, coins, and reliquaries. Key relics include:

- **Seated Buddha statue**: The central chamber featured a large Buddha statue seated on a floral base, coated with stucco and adorned with Persian and Roman motifs.
- **Gold reliquary**: A gold reliquary was discovered containing sacred relics, including:
    1. **Buddha's teeth**: Five tooth relics wrapped in cloth.
    2. **Silver rods**: Nine silver rods, arranged around the relics.
    3. **Kushan and Roman coins**: Coins from prominent rulers such as Wima Kadphises, Kanishka I, and Huvishka, as well as Roman emperors.

Table of Key Relics Found at Ahin Posh Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Teeth relics	Five teeth relics believed to belong to the Buddha
Gold reliquary	A reliquary containing the sacred relics
Coins	Kushan coins of Wima Kadphises and Kanishka I; Roman aurei of Domitian, Trajan, and Hadrian's wife Sabina
Silver rods	Nine silver rods placed within the reliquary

The discovery of Roman aurei (gold coins) depicting emperors Domitian (r. 81–96 CE), Trajan (r. 98–117 CE), and Hadrian’s wife Sabina (r. 117–138 CE) highlights the cross-cultural interactions between the Roman and Kushan empires.

Notable Coin Findings

- **Wima Kadphises coins (c. 113–127 CE)**: Symbolizing early Kushan patronage.
- **Kanishka I’s gold coins (c. 150–190 CE)**: Demonstrating the stupa’s primary patron.
- **Roman coins**: Gold aurei of Emperor Trajan and Sabina further signify Ahin Posh’s connection to the broader ancient world.

3. Architectural Features

The Ahin Posh Stupa was renowned for its unique architectural design and cultural influences:

- **Central dome and underground chamber**: The stupa featured a central chamber connected by a vaulted passage leading to a subterranean reliquary.
- **Persian and Roman influences**: The seated Buddha statue displayed a combination of Persian floral designs and Roman drapery motifs.
- **Stone and stucco work**: The walls were adorned with intricate stucco carvings, including floral motifs and guardian figures.

Simpson's records describe the reliquary chamber as a domed vault with elaborate stucco decorations, housing the sacred relics in a central niche.

4. Archaeological Findings

The excavations at Ahin Posh uncovered a wealth of relics and artifacts, including:

- **Gold coins**: Coins from the reigns of Kushan rulers Wima Kadphises and Kanishka I were found alongside Roman coins.
- **Buddha statue**: A massive stucco-coated Buddha figure seated on a floral base was discovered at the center of the relic chamber.
- **Roman coins**: The inclusion of Roman coins suggests that the stupa's relic chamber was sealed during the early 2nd century CE.

Simpson's findings, including the elaborate Buddha statue and reliquary, were transported to the British Museum for preservation. However, the relics themselves, including the tooth relics, remain sealed under legal protection and are not displayed.

5. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The Ahin Posh Stupa has faced challenges over the years due to:

- **Colonial-era dispersal**: Many of the relics and artifacts were removed from the site and transported to British museums.
- **Legal restrictions**: The golden reliquary containing the Buddha's tooth relics remains sealed under legal prohibitions to prevent tampering.
- **Conflict-related damage**: The site has suffered from looting and degradation due to political instability in the region.

Despite these challenges, the relics from Ahin Posh continue to be preserved in institutions such as the British Museum, which houses Simpson's findings.

6. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Ahin Posh Stupa represents the Kushan Empire's commitment to Buddhism and its role in promoting cultural exchange. The inclusion of Roman coins and Persian artistic motifs underscores the interconnectedness of ancient civilizations. The stupa served as a significant site for relic veneration, symbolizing the Buddha's physical and spiritual legacy.

The legend surrounding the golden reliquary suggests that it was Kanishka I's personal relic casket, worn over his right shoulder during important ceremonies, further enhancing its spiritual and symbolic importance.

7. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other Kushan stupas, such as the Manikyala and Bimaran stupas, Ahin Posh stands out for its unique combination of Kushan, Persian, and Roman elements. Unlike the simpler reliquaries found at Bimaran, the gold reliquary at Ahin Posh was more elaborate and associated with prominent imperial figures.

8. Summarize findings of the research

The **Ahan Posh Stupa** is an ancient Buddhist stupa and monastic complex near **Jalalabad, Afghanistan**, constructed by **Emperor Kanishka** of the **Kushan Empire** around **CE 150-160**. The name *Ahan Posh* translates from Persian as "the place covered with iron," referencing the site's appearance or symbolic strength.

Discovery and Excavations:

- In **February 1879**, **William Simpson** began excavations at Ahan Posh Stupa.
- During the clearing of the stupa's dome, a **58-centimeter-wide entrance** to the relic chamber was discovered, leading to a central domed chamber adorned with **stucco floral decorations**.
- At the center of the chamber, a **colossal seated Buddha statue** was found, showcasing influences from **Persian and Roman art styles**.

Relics and Treasures:

- Inside the relic chamber was a **golden casket** resting on carefully arranged bricks.
- The casket contained **five Buddha Tooth Relics** wrapped in cloth and **nine silver needles**, sealed with gold coins from the reigns of **Wima Kadphises** and **Kanishka**.
- According to legend, this reliquary was **Emperor Kanishka's personal ornament**, worn on his right shoulder during ceremonies.

Additional Discoveries:

- Several Kushan Empire coins were found in the chamber, including:
    1. **10 coins of Wima Kadphises** (CE 113–127)
    2. **6 coins of Kanishka I** (CE 150–190)
    3. **A Buddha statue** and a **coin of Huvishka**
- Roman coins and aurei (gold coins) were also discovered, including:
    1. A coin of **Emperor Domitian** (CE 81–96)
    2. A coin of **Emperor Trajan** (CE 98–117)
    3. A coin of **Sabina**, wife of **Emperor Hadrian** (CE 117–138)

These Roman coins suggest that the final enshrinement of the stupa's relics may have occurred during the **second century CE**.

Current Status of Relics:

- The relics and artifacts from Ahan Posh are now preserved in the **British Museum**.
- The golden reliquary containing the Buddha's Tooth Relics is legally protected and cannot be opened for public viewing due to preservation laws.

The **Ahan Posh Stupa** exemplifies the cultural exchange between the Kushan Empire and the Roman world, reflected in the Roman coins and artistic styles. This site remains a key testament to the Kushan Empire's role in spreading Buddhism and preserving sacred relics of the Buddha.

The Ahin Posh Stupa remains a remarkable testament to the religious and cultural patronage of the Kushan Empire. The discovery of sacred relics, Kushan and Roman coins, and intricate sculptures highlights the significance of the site in the history of Buddhism. Despite the challenges of preservation, Ahin Posh continues to captivate scholars and devotees as a symbol of the enduring legacy of the Buddha and the cross-cultural interactions that shaped the ancient world.

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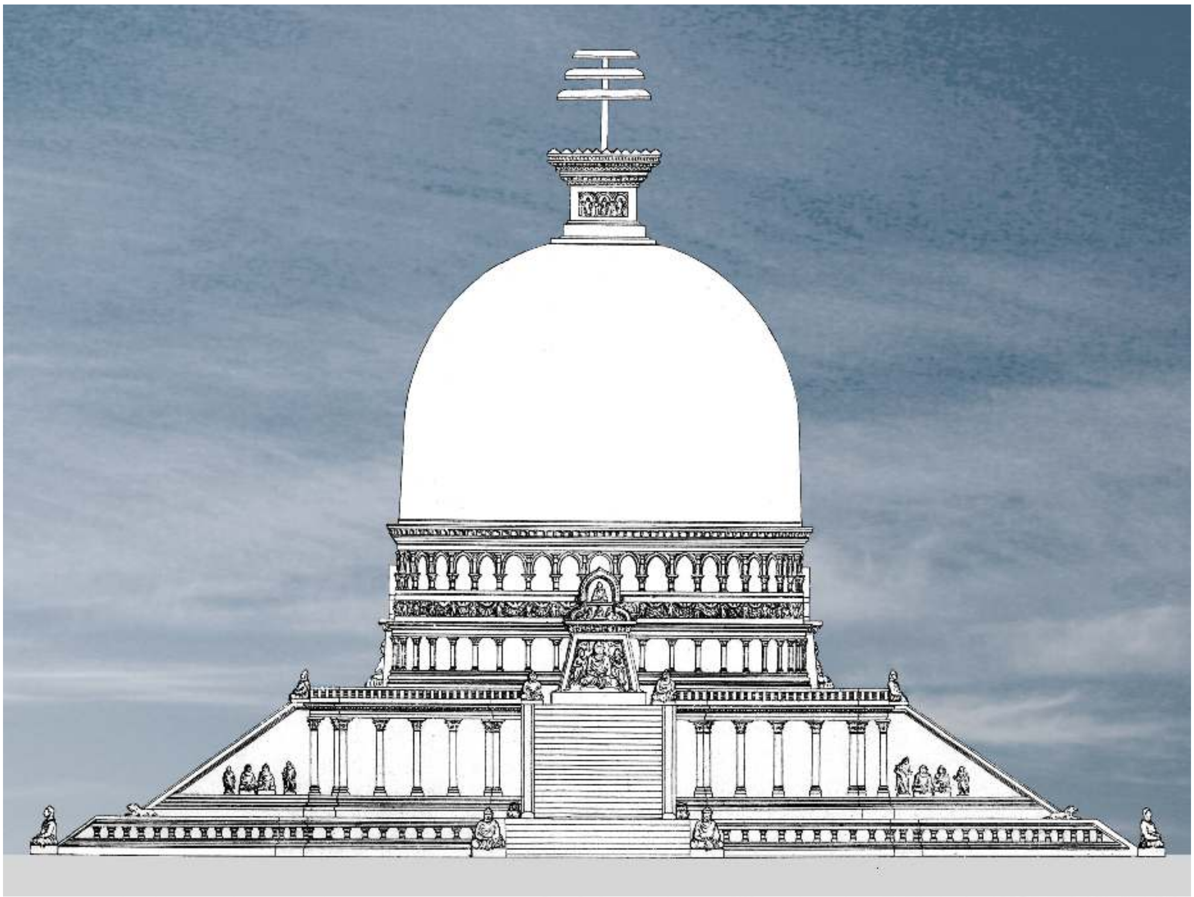

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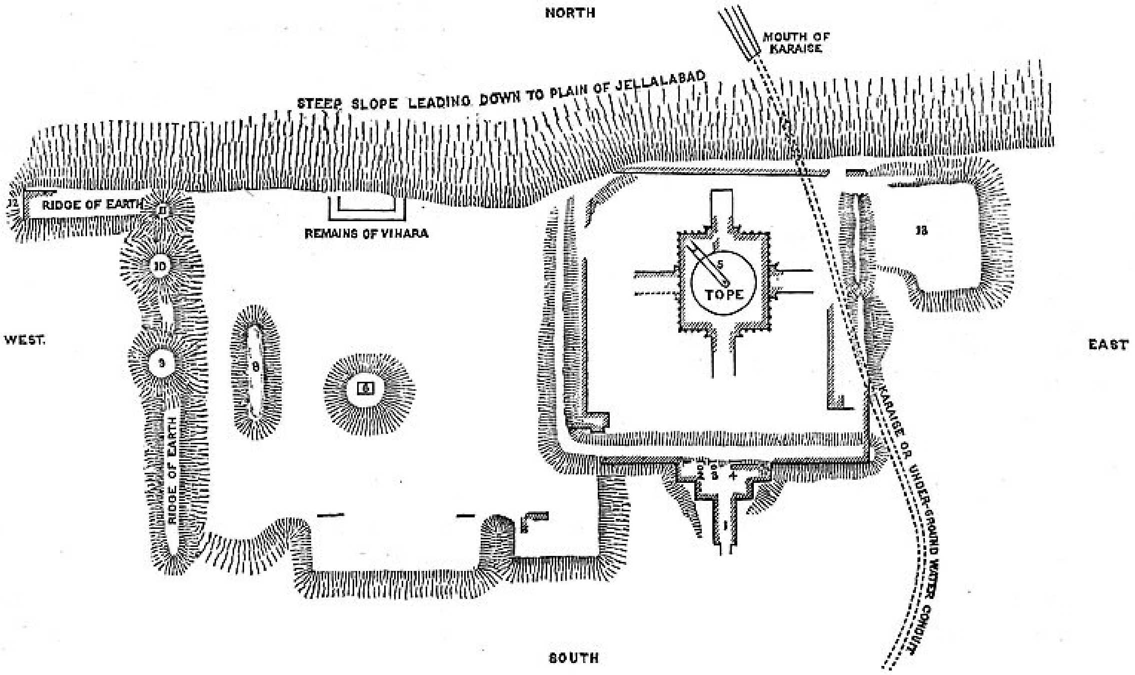
NORTH
MOUTH OF KARAISE
STEEP SLOPE LEADING DOWN TO PLAIN OF JELLALABAD
RIDGE OF EARTH
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TOPE
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KARAISE OR UNDER-GROUND WATER CONDUIT
SOUTH

SKETCH-PLAN OF AHIN POSH TOPE AND MOUNDS OF VIHARA.

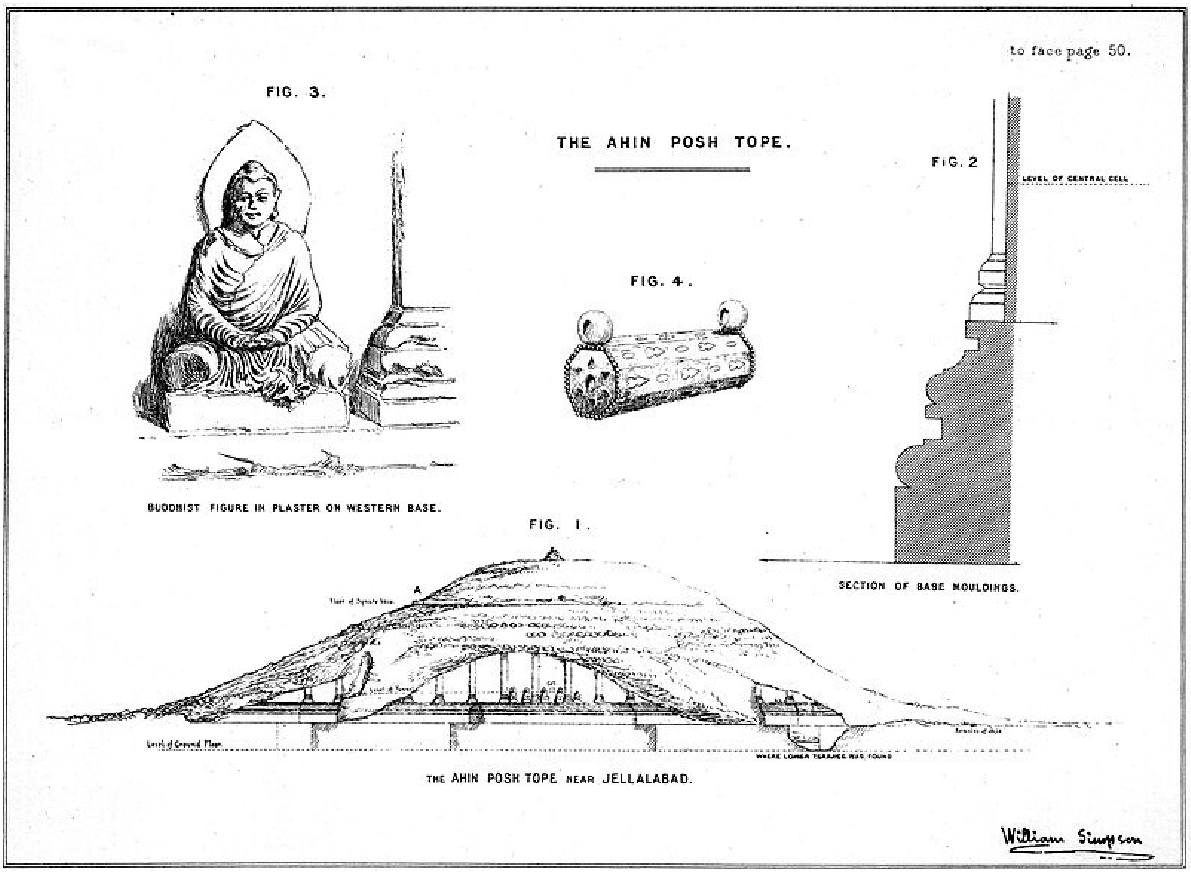
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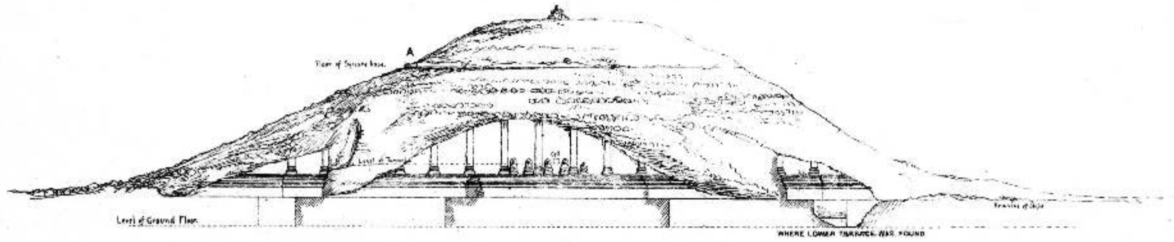
FIG. 3.
THE AHIN POSH TOPE.
FIG. 2
LEVEL OF CENTRAL CELL
FIG. 4.
BUDDHIST FIGURE IN PLASTER ON WESTERN BASE.
FIG. 1.
A
SECTION OF BASE MOULDINGS.
Level of Ground Floor.
WHERE LOWER TERRACE WAS FOUND
THE AHIN POSH TOPE NEAR JELLALABAD.
William Simpson


A
Floor of Square base.
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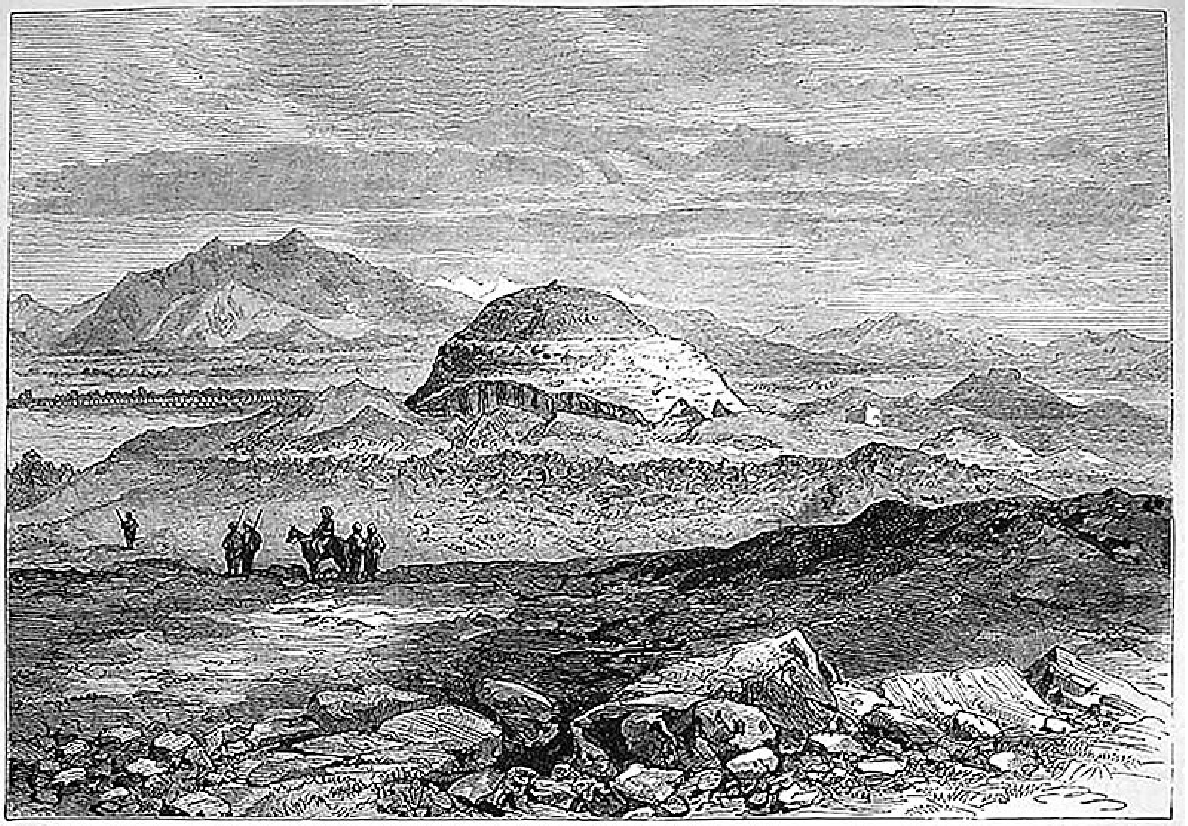

THE AHIN POSH TOPE AND VIHARA, NEAR JELLALABAD.
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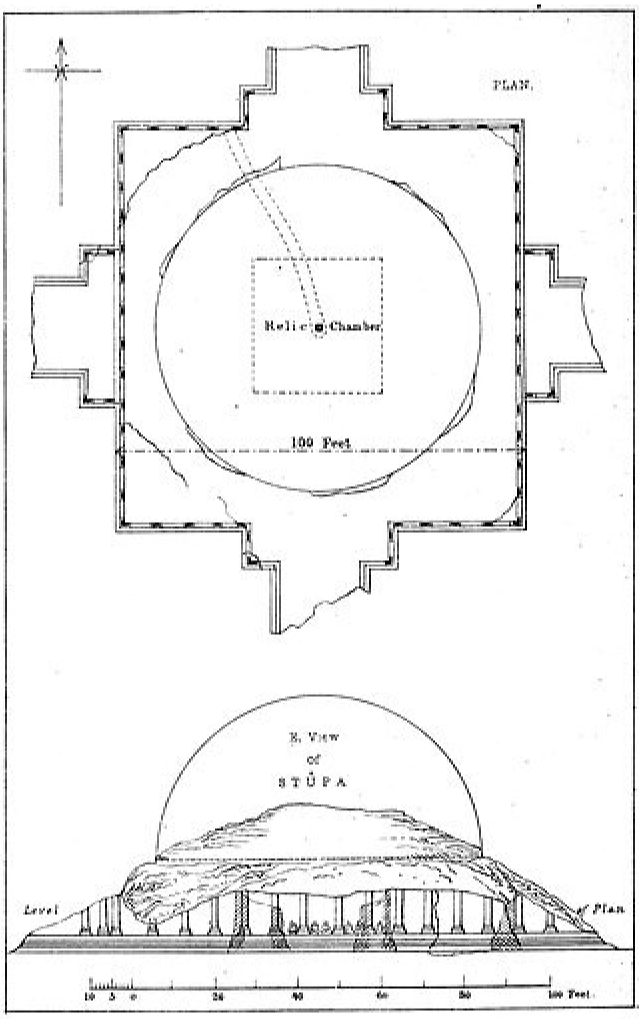
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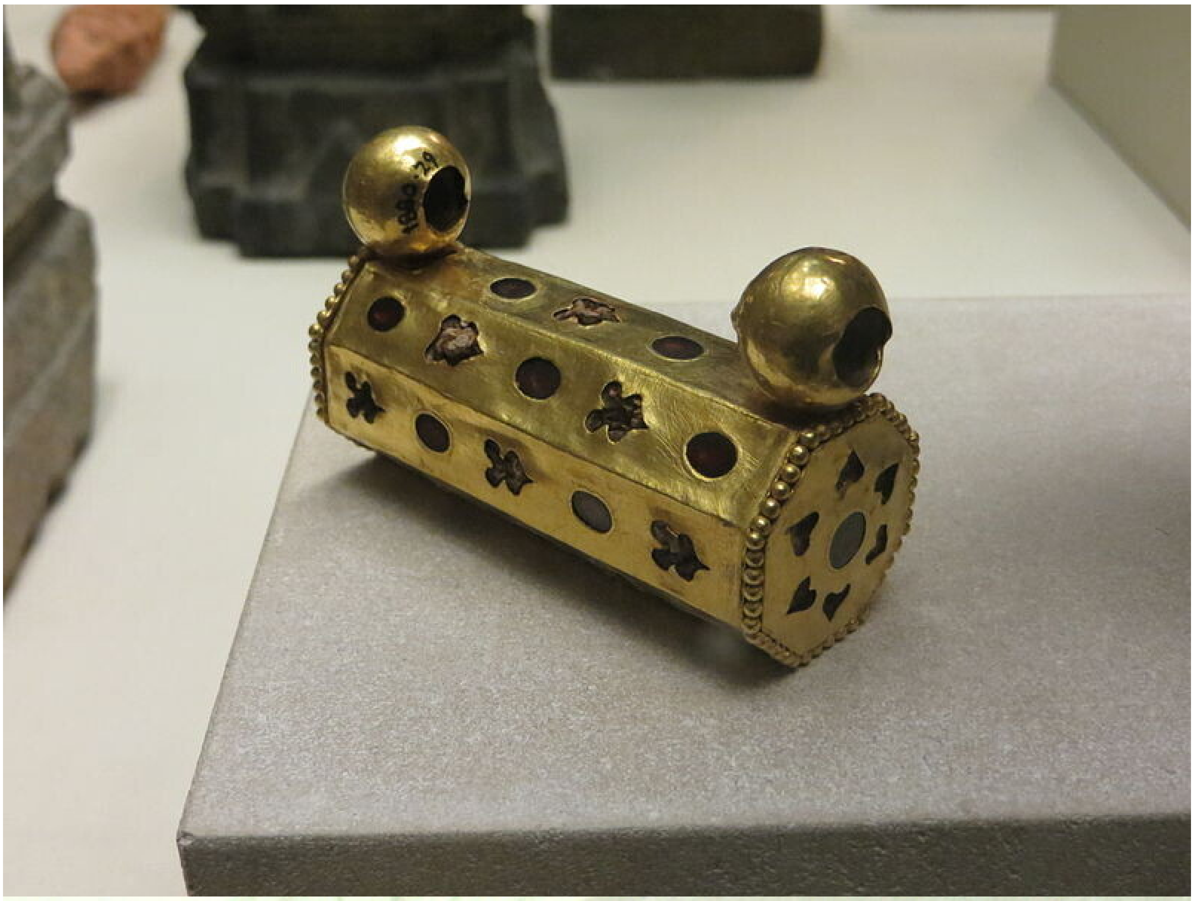
AHIN-POSH STŪPA.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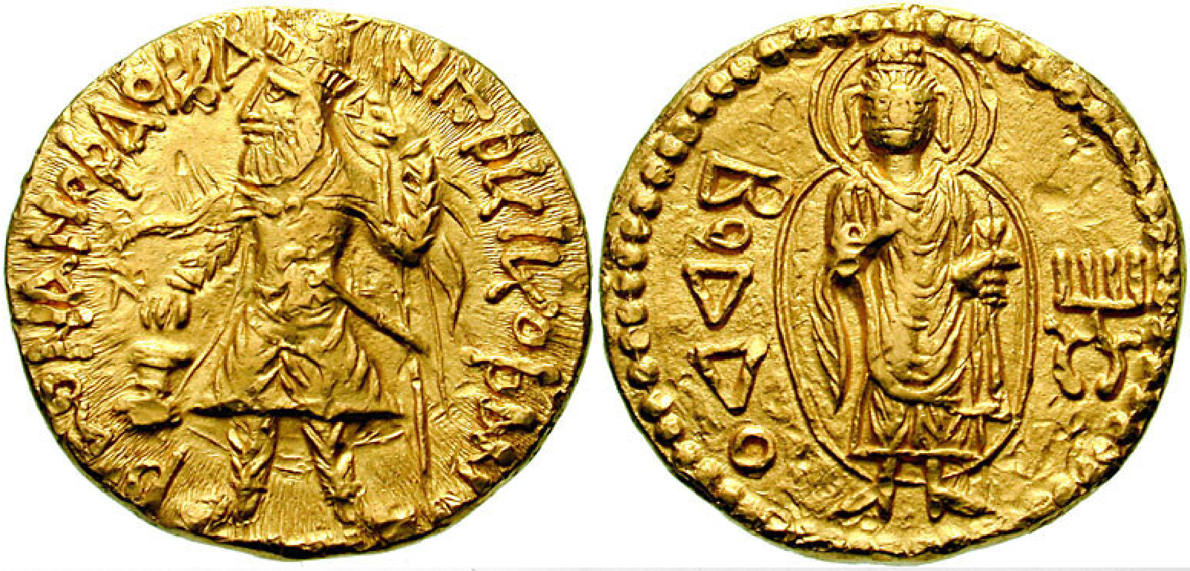

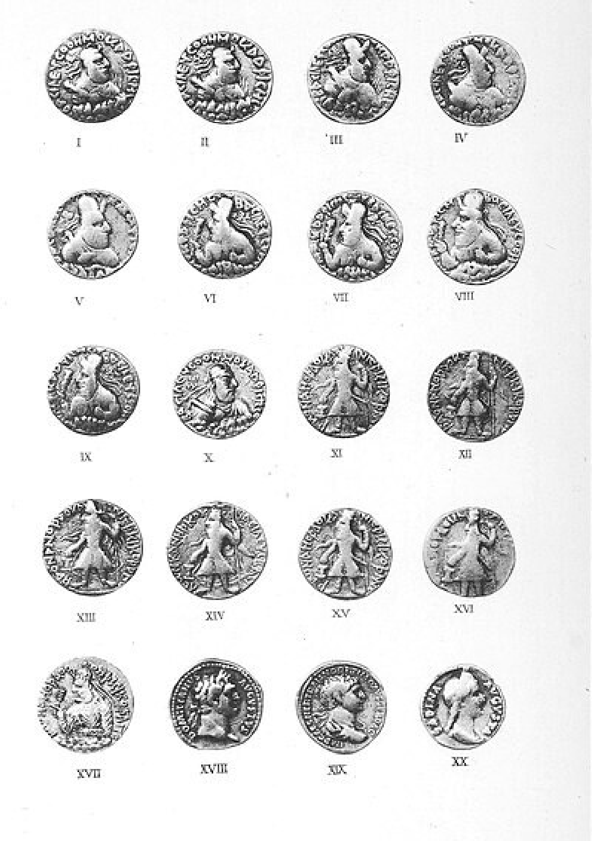
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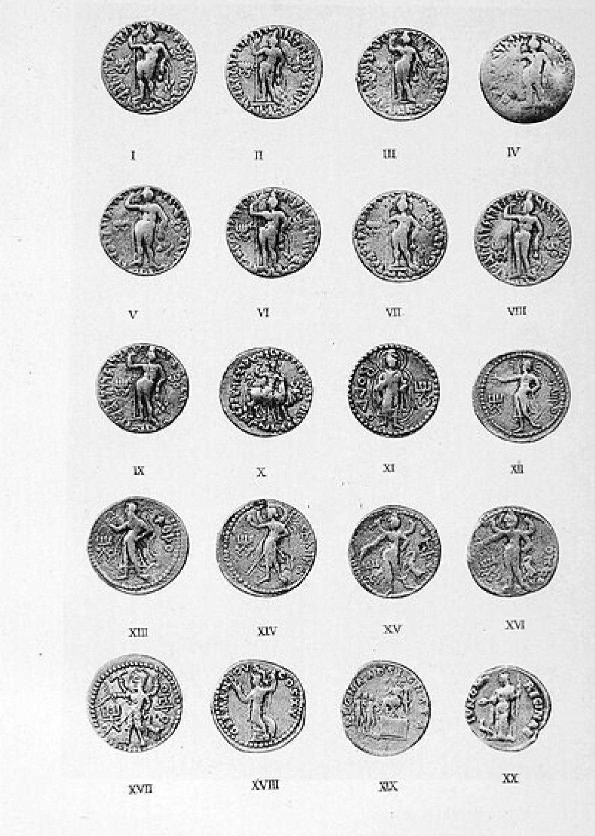
GOLD COINS FOUND IN THE AHIN POSH TOPE, JALALABAD.
(Obverses.)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GOLD COINS FOUND IN THE AHIN POSH TOPE, JALALABAD.
(Reverses.)

ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΒΑCΙΛΕѠΝ ΚΑΝΗϷΚΟΥ

13. Nagarjunakonda: The Lost Buddhist University of the South

1. Historical Background

Nagarjunakonda, meaning "Hill of Nagarjuna" in Telugu, was a prominent ancient Buddhist center located near Nagarjuna Sagar in Telangana, India. The site, also referred to as *Sriparvata* (meaning "Holy Mountain"), was one of the wealthiest and most significant Buddhist sites in Southern India. The region flourished as a spiritual and educational hub during the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, particularly under the Ikshvaku dynasty, who were patrons of Buddhism.

Named after the revered Mahayana Buddhist scholar Nagarjuna, the site housed numerous stupas, monasteries, and educational institutions. Monks and scholars from regions such as Gandhara, Bengal, Sri Lanka, and China journeyed here for spiritual learning. However, the construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam in the 1960s submerged the ancient city beneath water, leaving only memories of this once-great center.

2. Relics Enshrined

Excavations at Nagarjunakonda have unearthed numerous sacred relics and artifacts, reflecting the site's religious and cultural significance. Key relics include:

- **Buddha's tooth relics**: Three sacred teeth of the Buddha were discovered in reliquaries.
- **Bone fragments**: Fragments believed to be of the Buddha's remains were found alongside the tooth relics.
- **Gold and silver ornaments**: Ornaments, including a pair of gold earrings associated with Prince Siddhartha (the Buddha in his princely life).

- **Jewelry and coins**: Gold coins and precious jewelry dating from the Ikshvaku dynasty.

Table of Key Relics Found at Nagarjunakonda

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth relics	Three tooth relics, with one still preserved in India
Bone fragments	Remains believed to belong to the Buddha
Earrings	Gold earrings attributed to Prince Siddhartha
Gold reliquaries	Caskets containing relics, inscribed with sacred texts
Coins	Coins from the Ikshvaku dynasty and later periods

Despite the significance of the relics, looting and poor preservation led to the loss of one tooth relic, while another was recovered after an attempted theft. The remaining relics are preserved at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi under strict security.

3. Architectural Features

Nagarjunakonda featured an extensive layout of stupas, monasteries, and educational halls. The primary stupa was a grand structure dedicated to the Buddha's relics, surrounded by several smaller stupas and monastic complexes.

- **Main stupa (Maha Chaitya)**: A massive structure adorned with carved panels depicting scenes from the Buddha's life.
- **Five-story monastery**: Described by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien as a grand temple with five levels, each representing different symbolic animals, with the top resembling a dove (*Paravata* in Sanskrit).
- **Rock-cut temples and viharas**: The site contained intricately designed viharas where monks resided and studied.

Fa-Hien's writings refer to the "Paravata Vihara," which translates to "Monastery on the Mountain," emphasizing the site's spiritual grandeur.

4. Archaeological Findings

Excavations at Nagarjunakonda were conducted in several phases:

- **1926–1931**: French archaeologist Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil led the first systematic survey, followed by A.H. Longhurst and British teams who unearthed stupas, relic caskets, and carved friezes.
- **1938**: T.N. Ramachandran led further excavations, uncovering additional stupas and inscriptions.
- **1954–1960**: With the impending construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, R. Subrahmanyam led large-scale emergency excavations, salvaging relics and sculptures from the site before it was submerged.

Among the notable finds were inscriptions referring to the site as "Vijayapuri," the ancient capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty.

5. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam posed a significant threat to the preservation of Nagarjunakonda's heritage:

- **Submergence**: The dam's reservoir submerged the original site, making further exploration impossible.
- **Relocation of artifacts**: Many relics were moved to a man-made island in the Nagarjuna Sagar Lake, where a museum was established to showcase the salvaged artifacts.
- **Loss of relics**: Despite preservation efforts, some relics, including one of the Buddha's teeth, were lost due to theft or damage.

Efforts continue to preserve and study the surviving artifacts housed in museums across India, as well as in cities such as Paris and New York.

6. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

Nagarjunakonda served as a major center for Mahayana Buddhist scholarship, attracting monks and pilgrims from across Asia. The site is associated with the great Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna, who is credited with advancing the doctrine of *shunyata* (emptiness). Nagarjunakonda's stupas symbolized the spread of Buddhist teachings and relic veneration in the Deccan region.

The records of Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang describe the area as a place of learning and pilgrimage, with Hiuen-Tsang referring to it as *Bhramaragiri* ("Bee Mountain") due to its association with the legend of bees gathering around the monastery.

7. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other prominent Buddhist sites like Sanchi and Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda stands out for its vast educational complex and its association with Nagarjuna. Unlike the solid-domed stupas of Central India, the stupas at Nagarjunakonda incorporated intricate friezes and inscriptions that reflected the influence of Mahayana teachings.

8. Summarize findings of the research

Nagarjunakonda (meaning "Nagarjuna Hill" in Telugu) was an ancient Buddhist city and a prominent center for learning located near **Nagarjuna Sagar** in the **Nalgonda district of Telangana, India**. The region was once known as **Sri Parvata** and was one of the wealthiest cultural hubs of ancient India. However, it was submerged under water during the construction of the **Nagarjuna Sagar Dam** in the 1960s.

Historical Significance:

- The site was named after **Acharya Nagarjuna**, a prominent 2nd-century Mahayana Buddhist philosopher who established numerous monasteries and universities in the area.
- The city was a renowned center for Buddhist teachings, attracting monks and scholars from **China, Gandhara, Bengal**, and **Sri Lanka**.
- **Nagarjunakonda** was the capital of the **Ikshvaku dynasty** during the **3rd and 4th centuries CE**, located 150 km south of present-day **Hyderabad**.

Monuments and Structures:

- The region housed several **stupas, monasteries, and temples** catering to various Buddhist sects, reflecting its spiritual inclusivity.
- In the early 20th century, after the site was submerged, certain structures were reconstructed on an island in **Nagarjuna Sagar Lake** to commemorate its historical importance.

Discovery and Excavations:

- In **1926**, a local teacher named **Suraparaju Venkataramaih** discovered an ancient pillar and reported it to the **Madras Presidency government**.
- A Telugu-language epigraphy assistant, **Shri Sarasvati**, confirmed the site's potential as an archaeological treasure.
- The first official excavation was led by **Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil** in **1926**.
- Between **1927 and 1931**, **A.H. Longhurst** and his team conducted systematic excavations, uncovering stupas, relics, and sculptures.
- In **1938**, **T.N. Ramachandran** led another excavation, which revealed additional commemorative structures.

Threat of Submersion and Emergency Excavations:

- In **1954**, when the construction of the **Nagarjuna Sagar Dam** posed a threat to the archaeological site, an emergency excavation was conducted under **R. Subrahmanyam**.
- Between **1954 and 1960**, artifacts dating from the **early Stone Age to the 16th century** were uncovered.

Findings and Relics:

- Among the relics unearthed were **three Tooth Relics of the Buddha**, fragments of his bones, a pair of earrings believed to have belonged to **Prince Siddhartha**, and various precious gold, silver, and stone sculptures.
- The relics included inscriptions identifying **Sri Parvata Vijayapura** as the ancient name of Nagarjunakonda, which was closely associated with the **Ikshvaku dynasty**.

Buddhist Legacy and Monastic Tradition:

- The Chinese pilgrim **Fa-Hien** recorded a five-story monastery dedicated to **Kassapa Buddha** atop the hill, where each story represented different mythical beings, with the top floor shaped like a bird (*parāvatā*).

- Another Chinese pilgrim, **Hiuen-Tsang**, referred to the monastery as **Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li** (*Bhramaragiri*, meaning "hill of bees"). Some scholars believe he was referring to **Parimalagiri**, a sacred hill in present-day Odisha.

Current Status of Relics:

- A **Buddha's Tooth Relic** from Nagarjunakonda is preserved at **Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in India**.
- Two other Tooth Relics were housed in museums; however, one was stolen, leaving only one relic recovered.
- This incident prompted **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** to issue strict orders for the protection and preservation of the relics.

Cultural Preservation:

- A museum was established on an island in **Nagarjuna Sagar Lake** to display artifacts recovered from Nagarjunakonda, including sculptures, inscriptions, and reliquaries.
- Artifacts from Nagarjunakonda are also displayed in museums in **Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Paris,** and **New York**.

Nagarjunakonda remains a symbol of India's rich Buddhist heritage and serves as a reminder of the contributions of **Acharya Nagarjuna** and the **Ikshvaku dynasty** to the spread of Buddhist philosophy. Despite its submersion, efforts to preserve its legacy continue, with scholars and historians working to document and protect the relics that survived.

Nagarjunakonda remains an enduring symbol of Buddhist heritage and scholarly excellence. Although submerged beneath the waters of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the artifacts and relics salvaged from the site continue to provide valuable insights into the religious, cultural, and artistic achievements of ancient India. The site's legacy as a center of Mahayana Buddhism and its connection to Nagarjuna ensure its place in the annals of Buddhist history.

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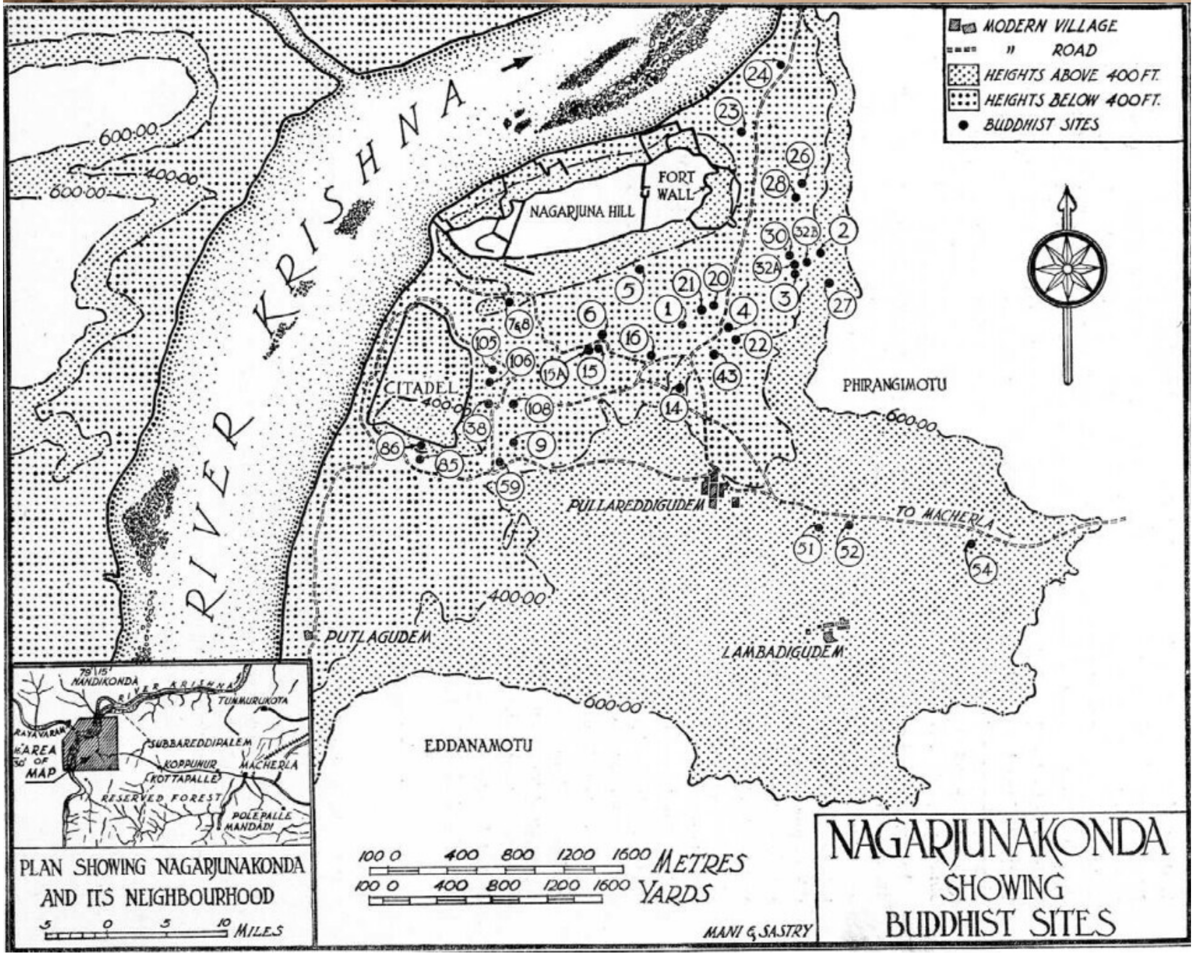
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NAGARJUNA HILL
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CITADEL
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SHOWING
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NANDIKONDA
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TUMMURUKOTA
RAYAVARAM
AREA OF MAP
SUBBAREDDIPALEM
KOPPUNUR
(KOTTAPALLE)
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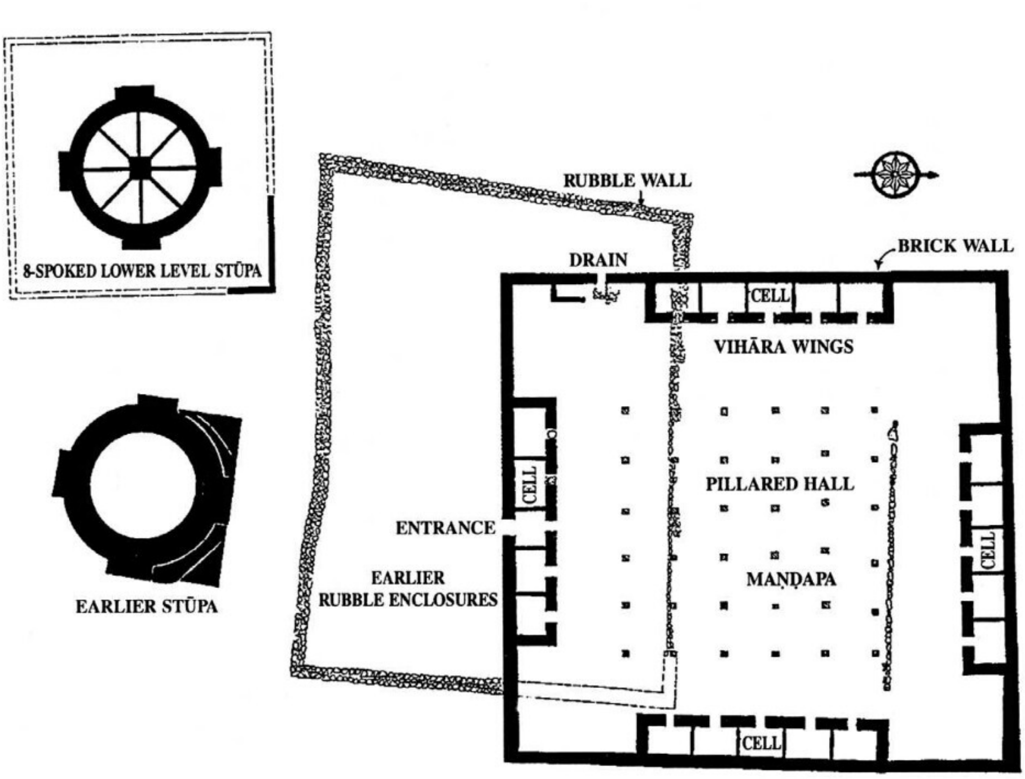
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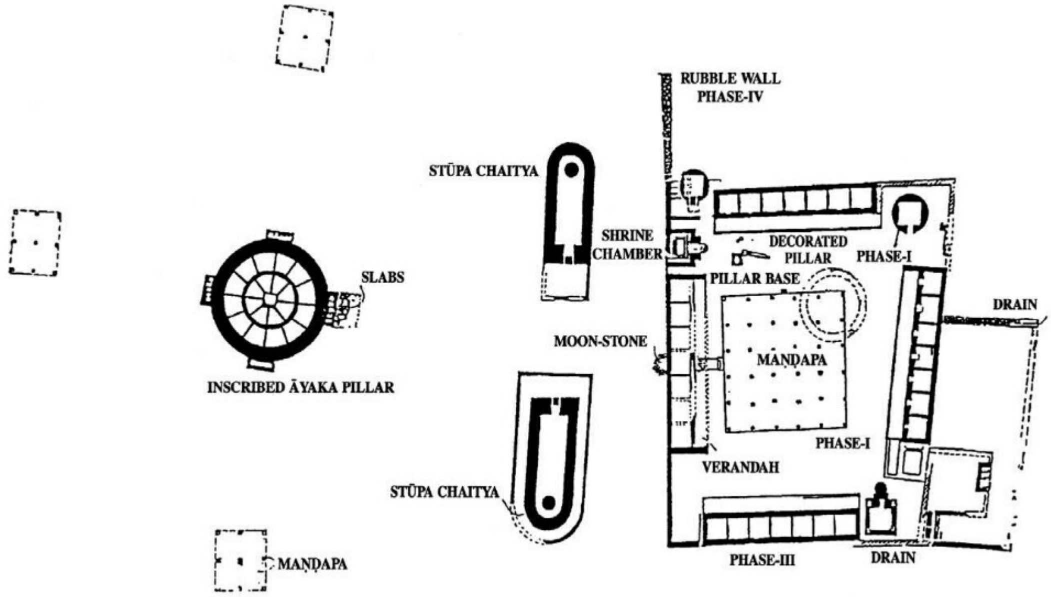
Fig. 5. Nagarjunakonda, site 7/8, from SOUNDARARAJAN 2006, fig. 43.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MOON-STONE
MAṆḌAPA
INSCRIBED ĀYAKA PILLAR
PHASE-I
VERANDAH
STŪPA CHAITYA
MAṆḌAPA
PHASE-III
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14. Rukhuna Stupa: The Apraca King's Legacy

1. Historical Background

The Rukhuna Stupa, located in what is now Bajaur, Pakistan, was an important Buddhist monument constructed under the reign of Indo-Scythian King Vijayamitra (12 BCE–20 CE) of the Apraca dynasty. The stupa was named after the queen mother, Rukhana, who played a significant role in its establishment. This site exemplifies the importance of relic veneration in Gandhara and the enduring Indo-Scythian devotion to Buddhism.

According to ancient inscriptions, King Vijayamitra received a sacred tooth relic of the Buddha from a Buddhist monk named Thavadatta while on pilgrimage. In reverence, he commissioned the Rukhuna Stupa in Sakrdu (likely Skardu) to enshrine the relic. The inscription records the dedication of the stupa in the Yona (Greek) year 201, corresponding to 27 CE.

2. Relics Enshrined

The Rukhuna Stupa was renowned for its sacred enshrinement of a Buddha tooth relic, alongside other ritual offerings. Key relics include:

- **Tooth relic**: The stupa was primarily built to house a tooth relic of the Buddha.
- **Reliquary inscriptions**: Inscriptions from the site describe the dedication ceremony, including prayers for nirvana.
- **Ritual vessels and ornaments**: Vessels used during the consecration ceremony and votive offerings made by royal patrons.

Table of Key Relics Found at Rukhuna Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth relic	Buddha's tooth relic gifted to King Vijayamitra
Reliquary casket	Casket with inscriptions detailing the dedication
Ritual objects	Vessels and ornaments offered during the dedication

3. Archaeological Findings

Excavations and studies of the Rukhuna Stupa have revealed significant historical details:

- **Inscriptions**: The Apraca inscription describes the stupa's foundation, stating that King Vijayamitra and Queen Mother Rukhana, along with their family and military commander Indravarma, participated in the dedication ceremony.
- **Casket inscription**: The reliquary inscription specifically mentions the monk Thavadatta as the donor of the tooth relic and expresses prayers for the attainment of nirvana.
- **Numismatic evidence**: Coins from the Indo-Scythian period, including those of King Vijayamitra, were discovered at nearby sites, confirming the Apraca dynasty's patronage.

According to historical records, the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien documented the presence of a Buddha tooth relic in Skardu during his travels, which may have been associated with the Rukhuna Stupa.

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The Rukhuna Stupa has faced significant challenges over the centuries:

- **Colonial-era dispersals**: The relics from the site, including the casket associated with the tooth relic, were transported to European museums. The reliquary casket is currently housed in the Musée Guimet in Paris.
- **Destruction and neglect**: The original structure of the Rukhuna Stupa was damaged over time due to invasions and neglect.

Despite these challenges, the inscriptions and relics continue to be studied by historians and archaeologists, shedding light on the religious practices of the Apraca dynasty.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Rukhuna Stupa symbolizes the Indo-Scythian rulers' commitment to Buddhism and their role in spreading relic veneration practices. The stupa served as a center of devotion, where pilgrims paid homage to the Buddha's relics. The detailed inscriptions reflect the intertwining of royal patronage and religious devotion in the Gandharan region.

The mention of prayers for nirvana (*nibbana-sukhapalam*) in the inscriptions highlights the significance of relic worship in facilitating spiritual merit and enlightenment.

6. Comparative Analysis

Compared to other Indo-Scythian stupas, such as the Manikyala Stupa and the Bimaran Stupa, the Rukhuna Stupa is unique for its detailed inscription linking the stupa's dedication directly to the royal family. Unlike the simpler votive stupas of the Kushan period, the Rukhuna Stupa also reflects the Apraca dynasty's emphasis on sacred relics as symbols of royal legitimacy.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Rukhana Stupa and King Vijayamitra's Tooth Relic Offering

The **Rukhana Stupa** is an ancient Buddhist stupa located in the **Indo-Scythian kingdom of Apraca**, in the **Bajaur** region of modern-day **Pakistan**. It was constructed during the reign of **King Vijayamitra** (12 BCE – 20 CE), a prominent Indo-Scythian ruler.

Historical Background:

- During his travels, **King Vijayamitra** encountered a Buddhist monk who entrusted him with a **Tooth Relic of the Buddha**. The monk instructed the king to enshrine the relic reverently.
- In response, King Vijayamitra established a stupa at **Skardu** (*historically part of the Apraca region*) to house the sacred relic.

Inscription Details (Kharosthi Script):

An inscription discovered at the site reads:*"In the 201st Yona year, on the 8th day of the month of Sarabana, King Vijayamitra of Apraca, along with his mother Rukhana, constructed this stupa. The military general Indravarma, along with his wife and son, made offerings of the Buddha's Tooth Relic entrusted by the master Samatitha, praying for Nirvana."*

Historical References:

- The Chinese pilgrim **Fa-Hien** also documented the existence of a **Buddha's Tooth Relic Stupa** in **Skardu**. However, he did not describe the stupa's exact size or architectural design.
- Scholars believe that the stupa referenced by Fa-Hien could be the one constructed by **King Vijayamitra**.

Relic's Current Location:

The reliquary casket (referred to as the Rukhana Casket) that housed the Buddha's Tooth Relic is now preserved in the Musée Guimet in Paris, France

Cultural Significance:

The Rukhana Stupa exemplifies the reverence held for the Buddha's relics during the reign of the Indo-Scythian rulers, showcasing their patronage of Buddhism. The stupa also highlights the intercultural ties between the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, and Buddhist traditions.

Despite the relic now being housed in a museum, the legacy of **King Vijayamitra's** devotion to preserving Buddhist relics remains a significant part of Buddhist heritage in the region.

The Rukhuna Stupa stands as a testament to the Apraca dynasty's contributions to Buddhist heritage in Gandhara. The discovery of the tooth relic and its associated inscriptions provide valuable insights into the religious and cultural history of the Indo-Scythian period. Despite the challenges of preservation, the legacy of the Rukhuna Stupa continues to inspire scholarly research and devotion.

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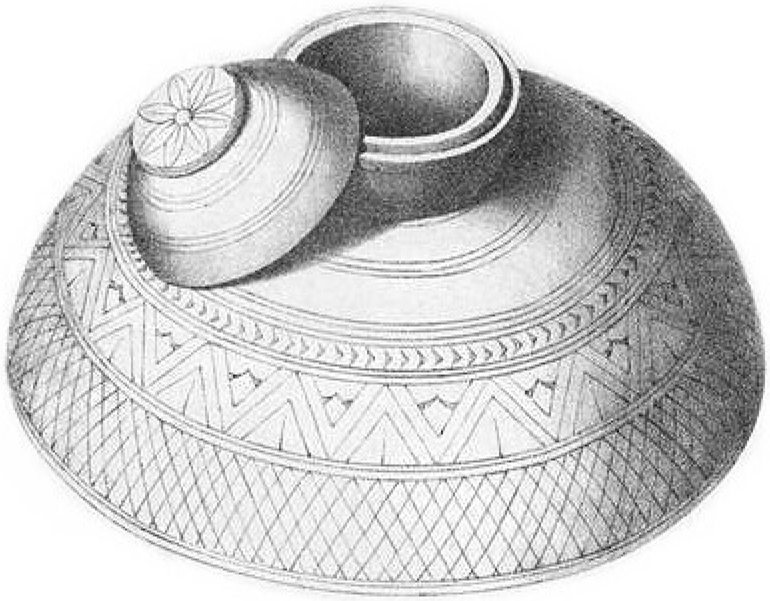

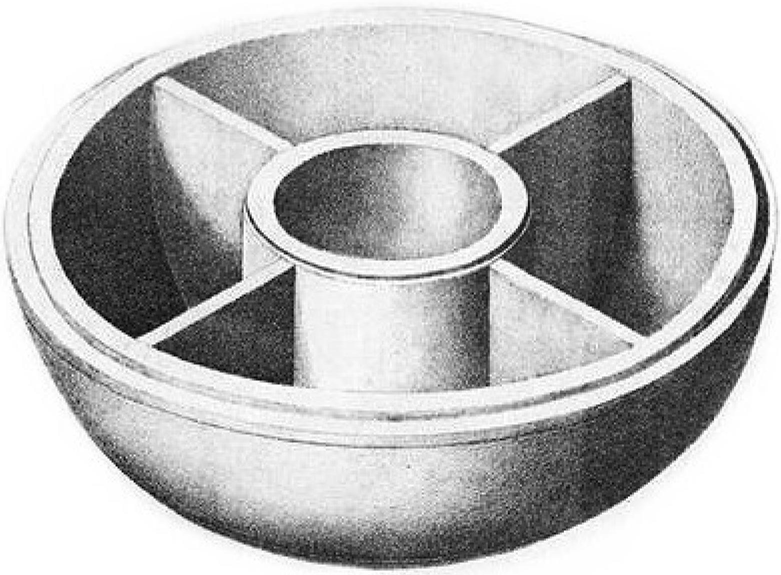

15. Shinkot Stupa: A Lost Legacy of Menander I

1. Historical Background

Shinkot Stupa, located in the Bajaur region of present-day Pakistan, holds immense historical and religious significance due to its association with the famed Indo-Greek King Menander I (Milinda). Bajaur was a key center of Buddhist culture during the Indo-Greek period, and Shinkot was believed to be a prominent monastic complex within the Gandhara region.

Menander I, who ruled from approximately 165–130 BCE, was renowned for his patronage of Buddhism and is remembered as the protagonist of the *Milinda Panha* (The Questions of King Milinda), where he engaged in philosophical debates with the monk Nāgasena and ultimately converted to Buddhism. According to legend, after his conversion, Menander dedicated relics of the Buddha in stupas across his kingdom, including the Shinkot Stupa.

2. Relics Enshrined

The Shinkot Stupa was said to have contained sacred relics in a finely crafted reliquary. Reports of the relics include:

- **Tooth and bone relics**: Allegedly containing a tooth and bone fragments of the Buddha.
- **Gold and silver reliquaries**: The relics were placed in intricately designed caskets made of gold and silver.
- **Inscriptions**: The reliquary was inscribed with the phrase "Saviour Great King Menander" as a dedication.

The reliquary caskets discovered at Shinkot were regarded as among the earliest and most significant reliquaries in Gandhara, reinforcing the site's religious importance.

Table of Key Relics Found at Shinkot Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth and bone relics	Believed to be remains of the Buddha
Gold and silver reliquaries	Caskets inscribed with dedications by Menander
Inscriptions	"Saviour Great King Menander" inscribed on the reliquary lid

3. Archaeological Findings

Shinkot Stupa was first excavated during the early 20th century. Key findings include:

- **Wooden reliquary box**: The reliquary was housed in a wooden box, which further protected the caskets.
- **Gold and silver caskets**: The relics were stored in two separate caskets, one made of gold and the other of silver, both bearing inscriptions referencing Menander I.
- **Disappearance of relics**: The reliquary caskets and relics were reported to have disappeared shortly after their discovery, adding an air of mystery to the site.

In 1937, historian and epigraphist R.C. Majumdar claimed to have seen the reliquary at a museum in Calcutta (now Kolkata). However, the reliquary's whereabouts remain unknown to this day.

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The Shinkot Stupa has faced several challenges over the years:

- **Relic disappearance**: The disappearance of the gold and silver caskets has made it difficult to study the relics in detail.
- **Unclear documentation**: Early records of the excavation are fragmented, complicating efforts to trace the reliquary's history.
- **Conflict and neglect**: The Bajaur region has experienced political instability, which has hampered archaeological preservation efforts.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Shinkot Stupa holds cultural significance due to its association with Menander I, one of the most celebrated Indo-Greek rulers who embraced and spread Buddhism. The legend of Menander's conversion by Nāgasena underscores the importance of Buddhism's philosophical teachings. The reliquary inscription "Saviour Great King Menander" reflects the reverence held for the king as a devout patron of Buddhism.

The stupa served as a place of pilgrimage, attracting monks and devotees who came to venerate the sacred relics believed to embody the Buddha's spiritual essence.

6. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other Gandharan stupas, such as the Bimaran and Rukhuna stupas, the Shinkot Stupa stands out for its connection to a prominent historical figure—King Menander I. While the Bimaran reliquary contained Indo-Scythian dedications, the Shinkot reliquary was explicitly linked to an Indo-Greek king, emphasizing the cross-cultural religious practices that defined Gandhara.

7. Summarize findings of the research

The **Shinkot Stupa** is located in the **Bajaur** region of modern-day **Pakistan**, an area historically significant as part of **Gandhara** and a prominent center of Buddhism. This region was once ruled by **Menander I (Milinda)**, the famous Indo-Greek king known for his devotion to Buddhism.

Historical Background:

- The **Bajaur region** was known for its deep reverence for Buddhism during the reign of King **Menander I** (*ruled circa 165–130 BCE*).
- **Shinkot Stupa** was discovered in the ruins of an ancient Buddhist monastery believed to have been constructed under **Menander I's** patronage.

Discovery of the Reliquary Casket:

- Excavations revealed a **wooden casket** containing **gold and silver reliquaries**. These reliquaries were believed to enshrine sacred **Tooth and Bone Relics of the Buddha**.
- The outer surface of the reliquary casket was inscribed with the phrase: *"In honor of the Saviour Great King Menander."*
- The inscription suggests that the casket may have contained relics handed over by **Nāgasena** to **King Milinda**, as recounted in the *Milindapañha (The Questions of King Milinda).*

Disappearance of the Relics:

- Shortly after the reliquaries were excavated, they mysteriously disappeared. Despite their importance, they were never officially documented or preserved.
- **Majumdar**, a scholar who wrote in **Epigraphia Indica, Volume 24** (1937), claimed to have seen the casket in **Calcutta**. However, the reliquary's current location remains unknown, and no records have surfaced since its disappearance.

Cultural and Historical Significance:

- The Shinkot Stupa and its reliquary are significant as they suggest that **King Menander I** actively supported the enshrinement of the Buddha's sacred relics.
- The reference to the *Saviour King* reinforces Menander's legacy as a Buddhist patron whose conversion story is immortalized in Buddhist texts.
- The loss of these relics is considered a great mystery and a cultural loss, as they were believed to be among the first Buddhist relics brought to **Gandhara**.

The Shinkot reliquary's disappearance adds to the lore surrounding the relics of King Menander I, leaving historians and archaeologists speculating about their fate. This historical enigma continues to capture the interest of researchers in the fields of Buddhist history and Indo-Greek studies.

The Shinkot Stupa remains a symbol of the rich Buddhist legacy of the Indo-Greek period. The disappearance of its reliquaries has left many unanswered questions about the site's historical and religious importance. Nevertheless, the association of the Shinkot Stupa with Menander I underscores the profound impact of Buddhism on Indo-Greek rulers and the role of relic veneration in Gandharan Buddhism. Ongoing research and discoveries may one day shed light on the fate of the missing relics and restore the legacy of this enigmatic stupa.

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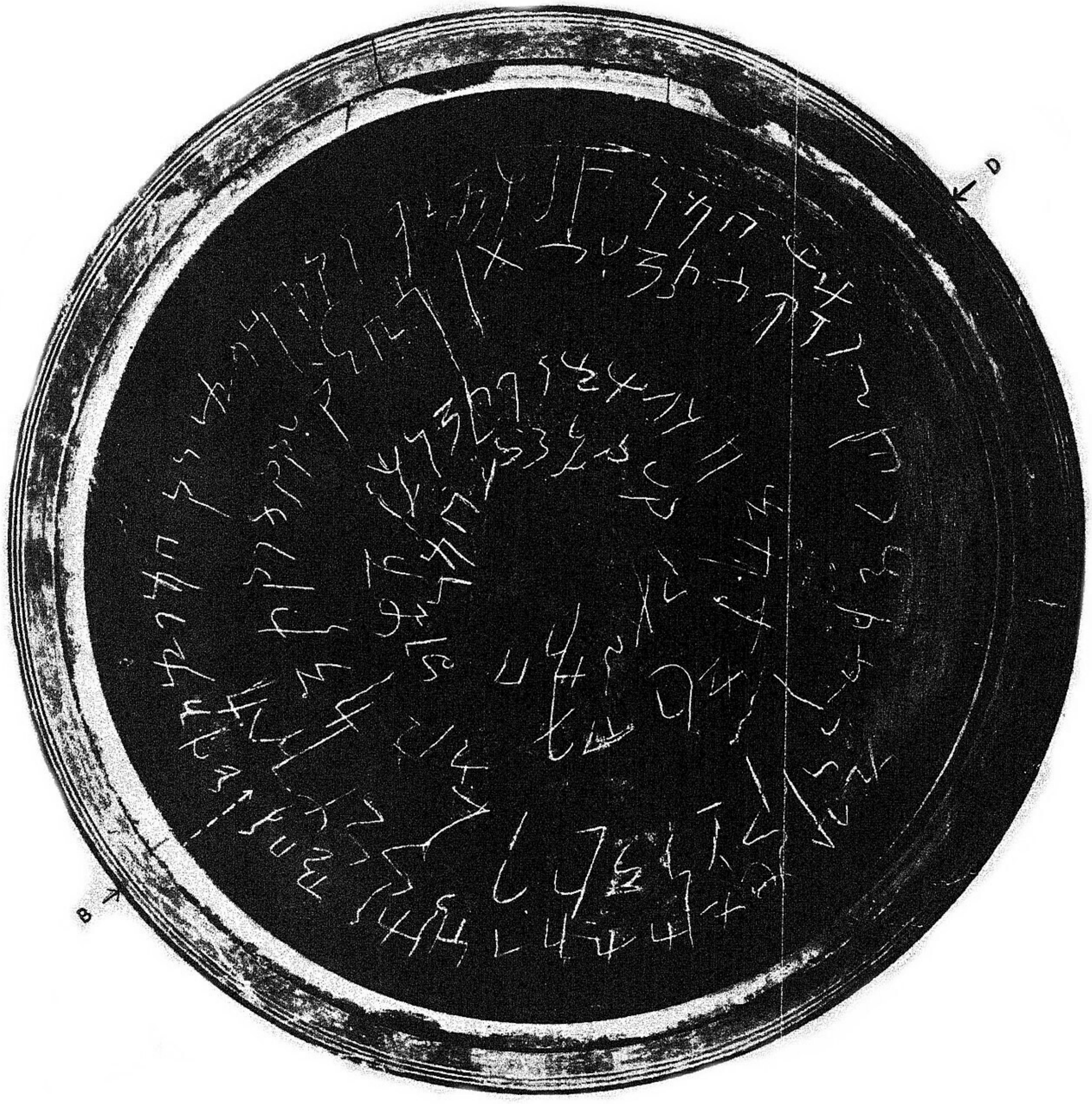
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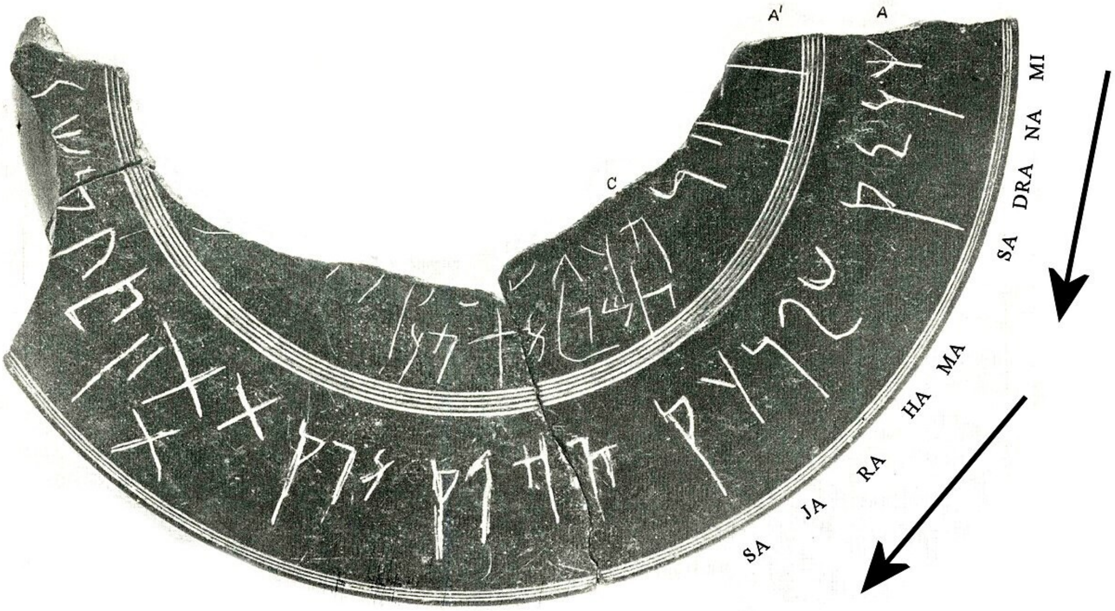
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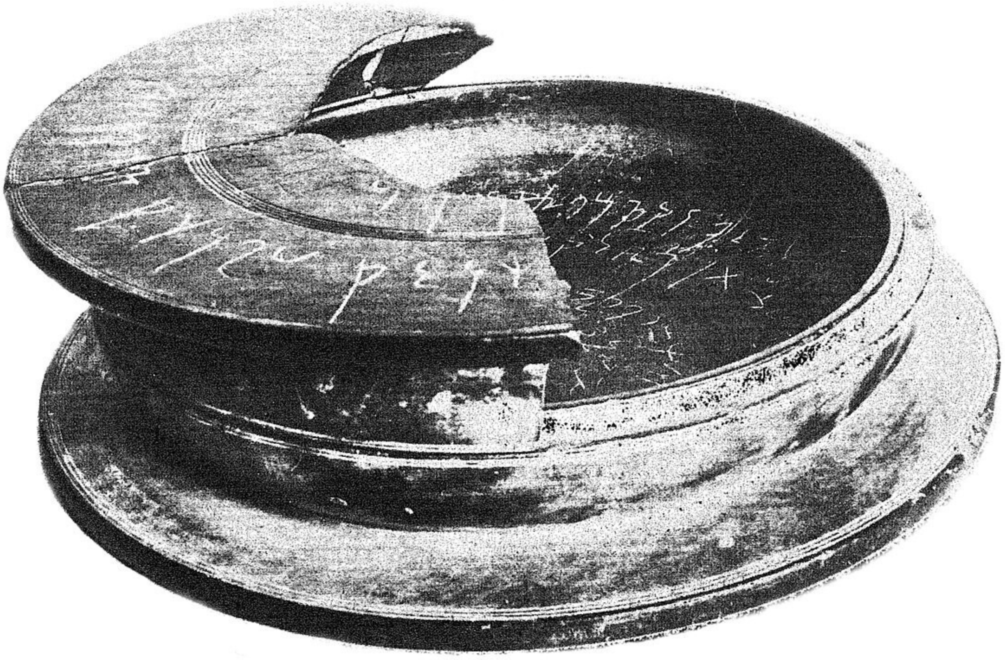

16. Dir Museum: A Repository of Sacred Buddhist Relics

1. Historical Background

The Dir Museum, located in Chakdara, Lower Dir, Pakistan, is an esteemed repository of ancient Gandharan artifacts, including sacred Buddhist relics. Established to preserve the cultural heritage of the Gandhara region, the museum gained international recognition after the 2003 discovery of a reliquary containing what some scholars believe to be tooth relics of the Buddha.

The relics were discovered during an archaeological excavation of the Shalkandi Stupa near Lower Dir. Dr. Zainul Wahab, a prominent archaeologist, led the research team that uncovered the reliquary casket. This significant find reignited scholarly debates about the whereabouts of the "lost" Buddhist relics from the Gandhara region.

Buddha's Sacred Tooth Relics in Dir Museum, Pakistan

The **Tooth Relics of the Buddha** are considered one of the most revered and priceless treasures for Buddhist devotees worldwide. Remarkably, the **Dir Museum** in **Chakdara**, **Pakistan**, is home to precious relics believed to be the Buddha's Tooth Relics, drawing both fascination and speculation.

Significance of the Relics

- In the Buddhist tradition, the Buddha's Tooth Relics hold profound spiritual value, symbolizing the Buddha's enduring presence and teachings.
- Several locations around the world, such as the **Lingguang Temple** in Beijing and the **Buddha Tooth Relic Temple** in Singapore, are believed to house the Buddha's Tooth Relics. These sites attract millions of pilgrims despite ongoing debates regarding their authenticity.

2. Relics Enshrined

The reliquary casket found at Shalkandi Stupa contained sacred remains, believed to be part of the Buddha's tooth relics. Key relics and their descriptions include:

- **Tooth relics**: Several small tooth-like remains, believed to be the Buddha's.
- **Reliquary casket**: Made of stone, the casket dates back over 2,000 years and features intricate carvings.
- **Clay containers**: Smaller clay containers were placed inside the reliquary for added protection.

Table of Key Relics Found at Dir Museum

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth relics	Small fragments resembling fossilized teeth
Reliquary casket	A stone casket from the 1st century CE
Clay vessels	Smaller vessels placed within the main reliquary for protection

The discovery sparked international interest, with archaeologists suggesting that the remains might be from a long-lost Gandharan stupa, aligning with records of relics believed to have disappeared from Gandhara centuries ago.

3. Archaeological Findings

Key findings at the Shalkandi Stupa included:

- **Reliquary inscriptions**: Although no direct inscriptions referencing the Buddha were found on the casket, experts believe the structure and relic contents are consistent with other Gandharan reliquaries containing sacred relics.
- **Preservation state**: The relics appeared to have fossilized over time, leading some scholars to speculate that cleaning the remains could reveal more identifiable features.
- **International exhibition**: The reliquary was displayed at an international exhibition in Germany, where experts from various countries remarked on its resemblance to known Buddhist relic deposits.

Dr. Wahab noted: *"These remains could be the missing Buddha relics from Gandhara. Further investigation is needed to confirm their authenticity."*

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The Dir Museum faces several challenges in preserving the relics:

- **Security concerns**: The region's political instability has made it difficult to ensure the safekeeping of priceless artifacts.
- **Insufficient funding**: The lack of government investment in preservation and research has hindered further exploration and study.
- **Public access**: Due to security reasons, the museum's underground chamber housing the relics remains closed to the public, limiting awareness and cultural outreach.

Dost Muhammad, founder of the Museum Defense Council (MDC), has advocated for improved security and governmental support, emphasizing the relics' potential to attract global Buddhist pilgrims and enhance international relations.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Buddha's tooth relics hold immense cultural and spiritual value for Buddhists worldwide. The belief in the sacred power of these relics draws pilgrims seeking spiritual merit. The presence of such relics in Pakistan underscores the historical prominence of Gandhara as a center of Buddhist learning and devotion.

Dir Museum's holdings have the potential to become a major attraction for Buddhist devotees and scholars. The site could foster stronger cultural ties between Pakistan and Buddhist-majority countries such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand.

6. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other relic sites such as the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple in Singapore and the Lingguang Temple in China, the Dir Museum stands out for its association with the ancient Gandharan tradition. Unlike the golden stupas housing relics in Southeast Asia, the Shalkandi reliquary was made of stone and clay, emphasizing Gandharan craftsmanship and minimalism.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Discovery in Dir Museum

- In **2003**, during excavations at the **Shalkandi Stupa** in **Lower Dir**, archaeologists discovered a **stone casket** containing the sacred **Tooth Relics** of the Buddha.
- The casket, more than **2,000 years old**, was carefully sealed and adorned with inscriptions indicating its religious significance.
- The discovery was significant, as scholars believe these relics may be the long-lost Buddha's Tooth Relics once revered in **Gandhara**, a key region for early Buddhist history.

Scholarly Interpretations

- **Dr. Wahab**, a prominent archaeologist, stated:*"There are teeth in the reliquary. I believe these are the Buddha's long-lost Tooth Relics from Gandhara."*
- The teeth have hardened over time and resemble stone, suggesting their ancient origin. Experts believe they will become more distinguishable with proper cleaning and preservation.

Exhibition and Recognition

- The reliquary was displayed at an international exhibition in **Germany**, where scholars from around the world agreed that it could be the missing **Tooth Relics of Gandhara**.
- **Dr. Zainul Wahab** remarked that the discovery has drawn international attention, reinforcing the historical significance of Gandhara's Buddhist heritage.

Challenges and Preservation Issues

- Security concerns and a lack of government support have hindered further research and the museum's ability to secure global recognition for the relics.
- **Dost Muhammad**, founder of the Museum Defense Council (MDC), emphasized the need for better preservation efforts and government commitment to safeguard these invaluable artifacts. *"If the Tooth Relics are confirmed as authentic, Pakistan could become a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists, boosting tourism and fostering better international relations, particularly with Buddhist-majority nations."*

Global Impact and Potential

- If authenticated, the **Buddha's Tooth Relics** in Dir Museum could transform Pakistan into a significant pilgrimage destination for Buddhists worldwide.
- Improved tourism could bolster the local economy and strengthen cultural ties with Buddhist-majority countries, enhancing diplomatic and cultural relations.

The discovery of the Buddha's Tooth Relics at **Shalkandi Stupa** presents a rare opportunity for Pakistan to celebrate and preserve its rich Buddhist heritage while fostering international goodwill and cultural understanding. However, this potential hinges on securing adequate preservation efforts and global recognition of the relics' authenticity.

The Dir Museum in Chakdara stands as a testament to Pakistan's rich Buddhist heritage. The discovery of the tooth relics at the Shalkandi Stupa has the potential to transform the museum into a global center for Buddhist pilgrimage and historical study. However, further preservation efforts, research, and international collaboration are necessary to authenticate the relics and protect this invaluable heritage. Strengthened cultural diplomacy and tourism could also foster economic growth and improve Pakistan's relations with Buddhist-majority nations.

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17. Kunala Stupa: The Story of the Blind Prince and His Devotion

1. Historical Background

The Kunala Stupa, located approximately 200 meters south of the ancient city of Sirkap in Punjab, Pakistan, stands on a hill overlooking the ruins of the Indo-Greek city of Sirkap. Dating back to the 2nd century CE, the stupa is named after **Prince Kunala**, the son of the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka and Queen Padmavati. Kunala was once the heir to the Mauryan throne but was tragically blinded due to the jealousy and schemes of his stepmother Tishyaraksha.

Despite his suffering, Prince Kunala remained a devout Buddhist and dedicated himself to spiritual practice. According to historical accounts, Kunala was later healed by a renowned physician in Taxila and reinstated as the ruler of Gandhara. In gratitude, he commissioned the construction of the Kunala Stupa and monastery as an offering of devotion. The stupa became a center for pilgrims, particularly those seeking healing from eye ailments.

2. Relics Enshrined

The Kunala Stupa is believed to have housed important relics of the Buddha. The dedication of the stupa also reflects Prince Kunala's spiritual gratitude for his recovery.

Key relics associated with the site include:

- **Buddha's relics**: The stupa is said to have contained a relic casket with sacred remains, possibly tooth or bone fragments.
- **Reliquary inscriptions**: Early accounts mention inscriptions documenting Kunala's role in the stupa's dedication.
- **Offerings and votives**: Historical records indicate the presence of votive stupas and devotional objects placed by pilgrims.

Table of Key Relics Found at Kunala Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Buddha's relics	Tooth or bone relics housed in stone reliquaries
Inscriptions	References to Kunala's dedication to the Buddha
Votive stupas	Miniature stupas placed by devotees seeking healing

3. Archaeological Findings

The Kunala Stupa was rediscovered during Sir John Marshall's excavations in 1951. Significant findings include:

- **Relic caskets**: Several stone reliquaries were found, though not all were intact.
- **Architectural remains**: The stupa featured a raised platform, a dome (*anda*), and a circumambulatory path (*pradakshina*).
- **Monastic complex**: Remnants of monks' quarters and meditation halls were uncovered near the stupa.
- **Inscriptions and sculptures**: Some inscribed fragments and relief carvings depicting scenes from Kunala's life and Jataka tales were found.

Artifacts recovered from the site were transported to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Some items remain on display, while others are preserved in storage.

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Despite its historical significance, the Kunala Stupa faces challenges:

- **Looting and neglect**: The site has suffered from unauthorized excavations and looting over the years.
- **Fragmentation of artifacts**: Many of the relics and inscriptions discovered at the site have been dispersed across international museums, making it difficult to study them comprehensively.
- **Lack of conservation**: The structure of the stupa has deteriorated due to environmental exposure and insufficient preservation measures.

Efforts to protect the remaining portions of the stupa and promote its historical significance have been slow but ongoing.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Kunala Stupa holds deep spiritual significance as a symbol of healing, resilience, and devotion. According to Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, pilgrims with eye ailments would visit the stupa, believing that their sight could be restored through prayer and offerings.

The story of Kunala's blindness and recovery became an enduring tale of triumph over adversity. The stupa not only commemorates Kunala's personal faith but also reflects the broader cultural and spiritual legacy of the Mauryan Empire's patronage of Buddhism.

6. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other stupas in Gandhara, such as the Dharmarajika Stupa in Taxila, the Kunala Stupa is unique for its association with a royal figure and its reputation as a site for healing. Unlike other stupas built solely to enshrine relics, the Kunala Stupa also served as a place for devotees to seek solace and miraculous healing, making it an important pilgrimage center in ancient India.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Kunala Stupa and the Legacy of Prince Kunala

The **Kunala Stupa** is an ancient Buddhist stupa located on a hill around **200 meters south** of the historical **Sirkap city**, in present-day **Pakistan**. The hilltop location provides a panoramic view of the ancient **Indo-Greek city of Sirkap**, making it a significant historical and religious site.

Historical Significance:

The stupa's name is believed to be derived from **Prince Kunala**, the son of **Emperor Ashoka** and **Queen Padmavati**. Kunala was a crown prince of the **Mauryan Empire** and a key figure in the history of Gandhara.

The Tragic Story of Prince Kunala:

- **Kunala** was known for his extraordinary beauty, particularly his eyes, which were said to be mesmerizingly beautiful.
- His stepmother **Tishyaraksha** was envious of his prominence and beauty. In her jealousy, she orchestrated his **blinding**, resulting in Kunala losing both his eyes.
- After wandering for years, Kunala was eventually reunited with **Emperor Ashoka** in **Taxila**, where a local healer restored his eyesight.
- In gratitude, **Ashoka** appointed Kunala as the viceroy of **Gandhara**.

Construction of the Stupa:

- Kunala constructed the **Kunala Stupa** and the adjoining monastery as an act of devotion and as a symbol of his gratitude for his miraculous recovery.
- He also enshrined sacred **Buddha's Tooth Relics** in the stupa and had inscriptions carved on stone tablets detailing his life's trials and his faith in Buddhism.

Historical Records and Pilgrimages:

- The Chinese pilgrim **Xuanzang** visited the Kunala Stupa during his travels and recorded that many **Buddhist devotees with eye ailments** visited the site, praying for healing and offering homage to the stupa.
- He noted that the site was a pilgrimage destination for those seeking relief from blindness and eye diseases.

Excavations and Discoveries:

- In **1951**, **Sir John Marshall** led excavations of the **Kunala Stupa**, uncovering the relic chamber containing offerings such as coins, relic caskets, and other religious artifacts.
- The reliquary items were distributed between the **British Museum** and the **Victoria and Albert Museum** in London. Some of the artifacts remain on display, while others are held in preservation.

Cultural and Archaeological Importance:

- The **Kunala Stupa** stands as a testament to **Prince Kunala's resilience** and devotion, symbolizing his transformation from tragedy to triumph.
- The stupa became a beacon of hope for devotees suffering from physical ailments, particularly blindness.
- The surrounding region, including the ancient city of **Sirkap**, reflects the deep connection between Buddhism and the **Mauryan Empire's influence** in Gandhara.

The story of **Prince Kunala** and the stupa dedicated to his faith and resilience continues to captivate historians and pilgrims alike, standing as a monument to both human endurance and the spiritual legacy of Buddhism in the region.

The Kunala Stupa stands as a powerful testament to the legacy of Prince Kunala, whose devotion and resilience continue to inspire Buddhist communities. Although the site has faced challenges of preservation, its historical and spiritual importance remains undiminished. With increased conservation efforts and scholarly focus, the Kunala Stupa could be revived as a symbol of Gandharan heritage and Buddhist devotion.

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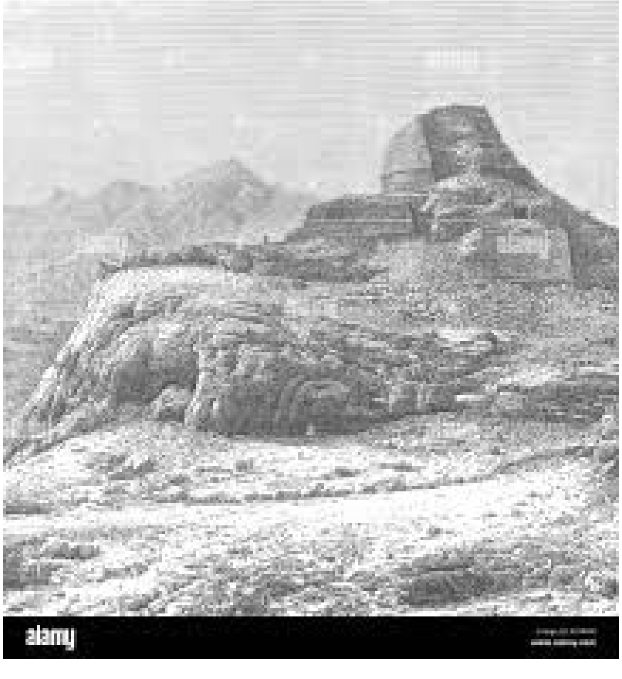

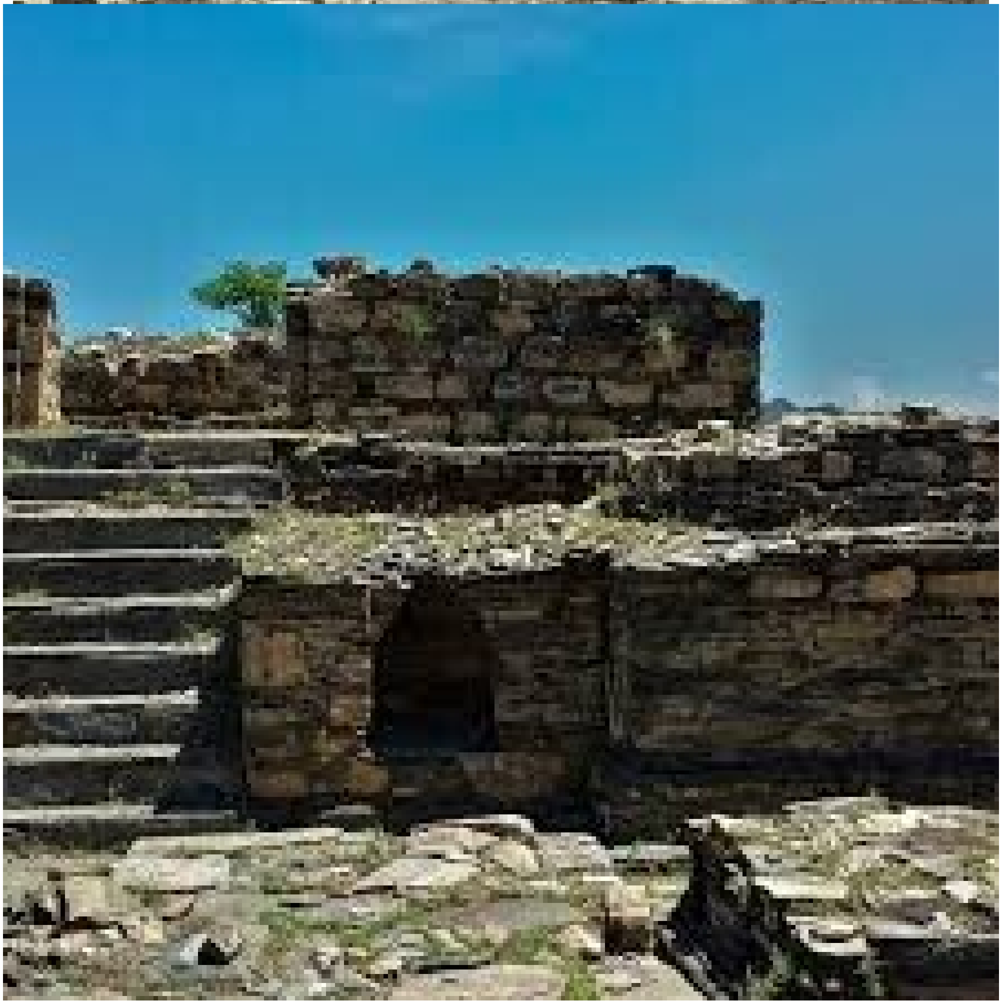

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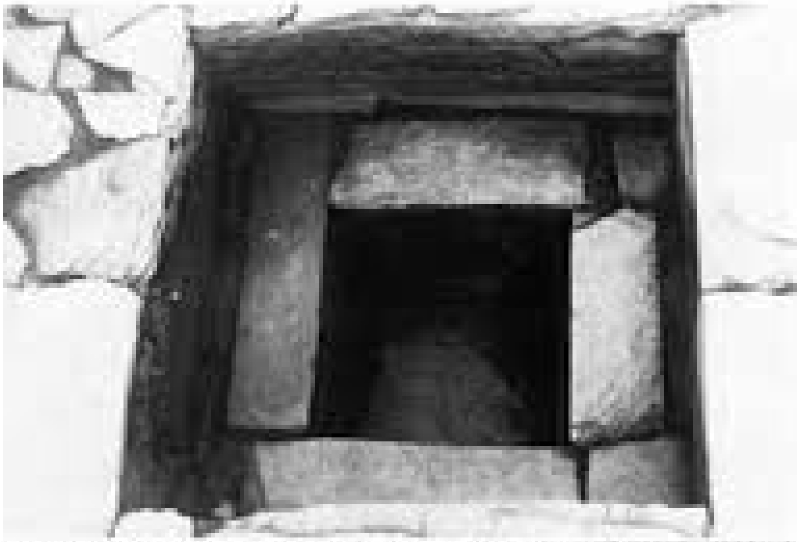

18. Sihanada Stupa: The Silver Reliquary of King Indravarman

1. Historical Background

The Sihanada Stupa, located in the ancient city of Maogha (modern-day Kapisa), is a significant Buddhist relic site attributed to **King Indravarman** of the Apraca dynasty. Constructed in the 1st century BCE, the stupa was dedicated to the Buddha as a symbol of reverence and devotion. Maogha, situated within the Gandharan region, played a crucial role in the spread of Buddhism along the Silk Road.

The stupa is most notable for the discovery of an intricately crafted silver reliquary casket, inscribed with one of the oldest known Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, dating to approximately 8–10 BCE. The casket, shaped like a ceremonial goblet, contained sacred relics, including a Buddha tooth relic and bone ash.

2. Relics Enshrined

The silver reliquary casket found at Sihanada Stupa is believed to have originally served as a ceremonial vessel in Indo-Iranian royal rituals. Later, King Indravarman repurposed the goblet as a sacred reliquary for enshrining the Buddha's relics.

Key Relics Associated with the Sihanada Stupa

- **Buddha's relics**: Tooth and bone ash enshrined in a silver reliquary.
- **Silver reliquary**: The casket features an ibex-shaped handle, symbolizing Central Asian cultural influences.
- **Inscriptions**: The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions document the stupa's dedication and provide insight into royal patronage and religious practices.

Table of Relics Found

Type of Relic	Description
Buddha's relics	Tooth relics and bone ash fragments
Silver casket	A silver goblet with Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions and ibex motifs
Ritual vessels	Additional votive objects discovered near the stupa

3. Archaeological Findings

The Sihanada Stupa was excavated in the 20th century. Key findings include:

- **The silver casket**: Made of high-grade silver, the casket is adorned with three tiers and an ibex motif handle. Scholars have noted its resemblance to ceremonial wine cups used in Indo-Iranian traditions.
- **Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions**: The inscriptions on the reliquary reference King Indravarman and his royal lineage. They also mention offerings dedicated to the Buddha's relics.
- **Cultural significance of the ibex**: The ibex design at the top of the casket symbolizes strength and resilience and reflects Scythian and Central Asian cultural motifs.

Historical Significance of the Inscriptions

According to Dr. Richard Salomon, the inscriptions on the silver casket provide valuable information about Indo-Iranian rulers and their alliances. The casket mentions King Indravarman, who inherited the reliquary from **Kharaosta**, a prominent Indo-Scythian king whose influence extended from Gandhara to Kapisa.

4. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Despite its historical importance, the Sihanada Stupa site faces several challenges:

- **Relic dispersal**: The silver reliquary was reportedly taken to Japan and is now housed in the Miho Museum, limiting scholarly access.
- **Cultural ambiguity**: The use of ceremonial wine goblets as reliquaries has led to debates about the blending of Gandharan Buddhist and Indo-Iranian royal traditions.
- **Lack of detailed excavation records**: The absence of comprehensive archaeological documentation has made it difficult to trace the casket's original context within the stupa.

Efforts to repatriate the reliquary have been discussed, but no formal agreements have been reached.

5. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Sihanada Stupa represents the rich cultural synthesis of Gandhara, where Buddhist, Indo-Iranian, and Central Asian traditions converged. The silver reliquary illustrates the practice of converting royal ceremonial items into sacred vessels for religious purposes.

The ibex motif, commonly associated with Central Asian nomadic tribes, reinforces the idea that Buddhism in Gandhara absorbed artistic and cultural elements from the surrounding regions.

Inscriptions on the casket indicate that the stupa was a site of pilgrimage and devotion. The text includes prayers for the enlightenment (*nibbana*) of all beings, demonstrating the universalist ideals of Buddhist teachings during the Apraca dynasty.

6. Comparative Analysis

The Sihanada Stupa shares similarities with other Gandharan stupas, such as the Bimaran Stupa, which also contained precious metal reliquaries with inscriptions. However, the Sihanada Stupa stands out for its association with Indo-Iranian royal traditions, as evidenced by the use of an ibex-shaped handle and the ceremonial nature of the silver goblet.

Unlike the simpler stone reliquaries found in stupas such as the Dharmarajika Stupa, the Sihanada reliquary showcases the artistic sophistication and cross-cultural connections of the Apraca dynasty.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Sihonada Stupa and the Silver Reliquary of King Indravarman

The **Sihonada Stupa** was built in the **1st century BCE** by **King Indravarman of the Apraca dynasty** in honor of **Lord Buddha**. The stupa was discovered at the ancient ruins of **Mogga city** (modern Mardan region in Gandhara) and dates back to **8 to 10 BCE**.

The Discovery of the Silver Reliquary

During excavations, archaeologists uncovered a **three-tiered silver reliquary** in the form of a cup with a long-necked goat (ibex) engraved on its lid. Although called a "reliquary," scholars noted that its shape resembled the **wine goblets** commonly found in Gandhara and **Caspian** regions, suggesting an Indo-Iranian influence.

The **silver casket** contained **tooth and bone relics** of the Buddha, enshrined by King **Indravarman**. According to inscriptions on the reliquary, the casket was repurposed as a reliquary to hold sacred relics of the Buddha.

Historical Significance of the Inscriptions:

The inscriptions provide valuable details about:

- The **Apraca royal family** and their legacy.
- The diplomatic ties between rulers in **Northwest India**, Gandhara, and **Kapisa**.
- The cultural and ceremonial traditions of the region.

The **lower portion** of the reliquary was inscribed with numerical symbols commonly found in **Gandhara (Taxila)** and **Kapisa**.

Artistic and Cultural Interpretations:

- The **three-tiered reliquary** and the **ibex figure** suggest a blend of **Buddhist, Indo-Greek, and Indo-Iranian** influences.
- **Nuristan (ancient Kapisa)** has been known for ritual goblets used in Bacchanalian or Dionysian ceremonies, indicating a longstanding tradition of ceremonial drinking vessels.

Dr. Richard Salomon's Hypothesis:

Dr. Salomon proposed that the reliquary may have originally been a **ceremonial silver goblet** used by **King Kharostes** of the **Indo-Iranian kingdom** before being inherited by **Indravarman** and repurposed to enshrine the Buddha's relics. He suggested that this transformation reflects the adaptation of local customs into Buddhist religious practices.

Cultural Symbolism of the Ibex:

- The ibex on the lid represents **Trans-Pamirian (Central Asian)** cultural elements.
- The **Scythian** (Saka) tribes often used ibex imagery in their artwork, highlighting the influence of Central Asian cultures in Gandhara.
- This imagery suggests an early migration of **Kambojas** and **Indo-Iranians** into the Gandhara region.

Historical Figures Mentioned in the Inscriptions:

The reliquary inscriptions mention key figures:

- **King Indravarman**, who enshrined the Buddha's relics in the stupa.
- **Kharaosta (Khara(y)osta)**, an Indo-Iranian king referenced in the **Mathura Lion Capital inscription**, was noted as the original owner of the silver goblet before it was passed to the **Apraca dynasty**.
- **Yuvaraja Kharaosta Kamuio**: The term **Yuva-raja (crown prince)**, used in Kharostes' inscriptions, signifies a princely status, although its exact interpretation remains debated.

Cultural and Political Connections:

- The inscriptions reveal close ties between the **Apraca dynasty** and **Ashvaka tribes** who were part of the **Kamboja lineage**.
- Historical accounts suggest that the **Ashvaka tribes** fiercely resisted **Alexander the Great** in **326 BCE** before aligning with **Chandragupta Maurya** and contributing to the Mauryan Empire's military strength.

Excavation and Current Status:

Although the exact details of the excavation remain unclear, reports indicate that the **silver reliquary** and other artifacts are now housed in the **MIHO Museum** in **Japan**.

Significance of the Discovery:

The discovery of the **Sihonada Stupa** and the silver reliquary highlights:

- The religious and cultural convergence of **Indo-Iranian, Scythian, and Gandharan** traditions in Buddhism.
- The sacred importance of relics in Buddhist rituals and royal patronage.
- Insights into the history and political landscape of the **Apraca dynasty** and their interactions with neighboring kingdoms.

The **Sihonada Stupa** remains an emblem of the rich Buddhist heritage of Gandhara and the Apraca kings' devotion to enshrining the sacred relics of the Buddha.

The Sihanada Stupa and its silver reliquary offer valuable insights into the religious and cultural history of ancient Gandhara. The site illustrates the Apraca dynasty's patronage of Buddhism and its adaptation of Indo-Iranian ceremonial practices for religious purposes. Although the relics have been dispersed, the legacy of the Sihanada Stupa endures as a symbol of Gandhara's cultural and spiritual heritage.

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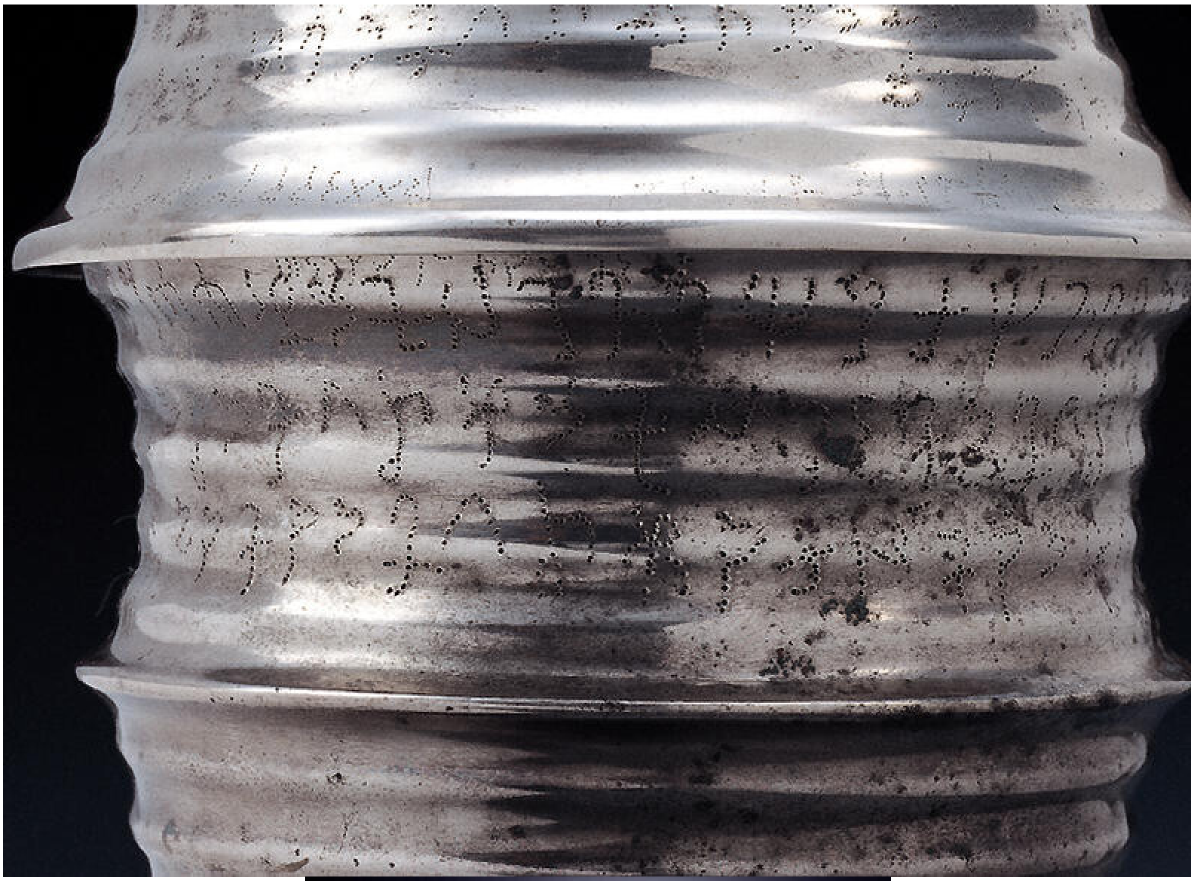

19. The Kanishka Stupa: A Towering Legacy of Devotion

1. Historical Background

The Kanishka Stupa, also known as the Shaji-ki-Dheri Stupa, is one of the most significant Buddhist monuments built during the Kushan Empire under the reign of Emperor **Kanishka the Great** in the 2nd century CE. Located on the outskirts of present-day **Peshawar**, Pakistan, the stupa was constructed to enshrine sacred relics of **Lord Buddha** and served as a major center for Mahayana Buddhist pilgrimage.

According to Buddhist texts and legends, the stupa was prophesied by the Buddha himself. In a story from the *Vinaya Sūtra*, it is said that the Buddha pointed to a mound of clay and foretold that a great king named "Kanishka" would build a stupa at that very spot. The prophecy inspired later Buddhist communities to honor the site as sacred ground for relic veneration.

The Chinese pilgrim **Faxian** (5th century CE) described the Kanishka Stupa as one of the tallest religious monuments of its time, standing at an impressive height of approximately 400–560 feet (120–170 meters), making it one of the tallest structures in the ancient world.

2. Relics Enshrined

The stupa housed an elaborate reliquary known as the **Kanishka Casket**, discovered during the British archaeological mission led by **David Brainard Spooner** in 1909. The casket is made of bronze with intricate carvings and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions indicating its dedication to the Buddha.

Key Relics and Associated Objects

- **Relics of the Buddha**: Three bone fragments and tooth relics were found inside the casket.
- **Reliquary casket**: A bronze casket inscribed with references to Emperor Kanishka and the relic enshrinement.
- **Inscribed votive objects**: Additional bronze tablets bearing dedications to Kanishka's spiritual offering.

Table of Relics Found

Type of Relic	Description
Bone fragments	Three bone relics believed to belong to the Buddha
Bronze casket	Kanishka Casket with Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions
Ritual objects	Gilded votive plaques, stone and bronze offerings

3. Archaeological Findings

Excavations at Shaji-ki-Dheri, led by D.B. Spooner between 1908 and 1909, revealed:

- **The Kanishka Casket**: Decorated with Buddhist imagery and inscriptions, this casket is considered a masterpiece of Gandharan art. It is currently housed in the **Peshawar Museum**.
- **Subterranean relic chamber**: The chamber contained the casket, relics, and various offerings.
- **Structural remains**: The stupa had an octagonal drum and was adorned with niches containing Buddha statues. The total diameter of the base was approximately 272 feet (83 meters).

Description of the Stupa's Structure

The stupa's design was remarkable for its height and grandeur. Historical accounts describe a massive domed structure topped with multiple layers of wooden and copper umbrellas.

- **Base**: Octagonal with elaborately carved panels and niches.
- **Height**: Historical estimates range from 400 to 560 feet (120 to 170 meters).
- **Material**: The outer walls were decorated with sculpted stone and gilded panels.

4. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

The Kanishka Stupa was more than an architectural marvel; it was a symbol of the Kushan Empire's devotion to Buddhism and their patronage of religious art and pilgrimage. The stupa became a major center for Buddhist learning and pilgrimage, attracting monks and devotees from across Asia.

The relics enshrined within the stupa were revered as symbols of the Buddha's eternal presence. The presence of relics reinforced the Buddhist belief in the Buddha's spiritual legacy and the sanctity of his teachings.

Chinese pilgrims such as **Faxian** and **Xuanzang** documented their visits to the site, describing it as a place of profound spiritual energy and historical importance. Xuanzang's writings mention that the stupa was adorned with precious metals and surrounded by monasteries.

5. Comparative Analysis

The Kanishka Stupa stands out among Gandharan stupas for its monumental size and connection to an imperial patron. When compared to other Buddhist stupas, such as the **Dharmarajika Stupa** at Taxila or the **Manikyala Stupa**, the Kanishka Stupa was unique for its height and architectural complexity.

Unlike the hemispherical domes of Central Indian stupas, the Kanishka Stupa incorporated stepped platforms and multiple umbrella tiers, reflecting Gandharan innovations influenced by Hellenistic and Central Asian styles.

6. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The site of the Kanishka Stupa has faced significant challenges:

- **Destruction**: The stupa suffered damage from earthquakes and invasions, contributing to its gradual ruin.
- **Excavation records**: Many of the stupa's artifacts were removed during British colonial excavations, with some relics being sent to museums in London.
- **Relic dispersal**: The Buddha's bone relics were sent to different locations, including **Mandalay, Myanmar**.

Despite these challenges, the Peshawar Museum has preserved key artifacts, including the Kanishka Casket, making it an important repository of Gandharan Buddhist heritage.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Kanishka Stupa (Shaji-ki-Dheri)

The **Kanishka Stupa**, located at **Shaji-ki-Dheri**, near **Peshawar**, Pakistan, was constructed in the **2nd century CE** by the **Kushan emperor Kanishka**. Renowned as one of the tallest buildings of its time, the stupa enshrined **Buddha's sacred relics**, including **tooth and bone relics**. Mahayana Buddhists revered this stupa as the **"Stupa of the Prophecy."**

Origins and Prophecy

According to the **Vinaya Sutta** and texts found in **Dunhuang**, the Buddha prophesied that a stupa bearing **Kanishka's name** would be built at this location:

"Pointing to a mound of earth, the Buddha said, 'Here, a person named Kanishka will build a great stupa in my honor.'"

In another version, four divine beings disguised as young men began constructing the stupa. When Kanishka saw them, they revealed themselves as celestial beings fulfilling the Buddha's prophecy.

Structure and Design

The original stupa, built between **150 to 300 BE (1st to 2nd century CE)**, was immense in size and modeled after the **Loriyan Tangai stupas**. It was later reconstructed in the **4th century CE** with elaborate stairways and terraced platforms.

- **Base Width:** 272 feet (83 meters).
- **Height:** Estimated at **400 feet (120 meters)**, although ancient Chinese records claim a height of **560 feet (170 meters)**.
- **Material:** The stupa was adorned with **bronze and gold plating**, and the pinnacle was topped with a **golden parasol**.

The base featured ornate carvings, and the stupa was capped with **gilded umbrellas** supported by **iron pillars**.

Historical Accounts

- In **520 CE**, **Sung Yun** described the stupa as towering above all nearby structures and surviving at least **three lightning strikes**, each time being swiftly repaired.
- In **726 CE**, the Korean pilgrim **Hyecho** wrote about the stupa in his travelogue *"Record of a Journey to the Five Indian Kingdoms"*, describing it as a shining marvel built by **Kanishka**.
- **Faxian** (in the 5th century CE) also documented the stupa's immense height, comparing it to **the rising sun**.

Excavation and Relics

In **1908-1909**, British archaeologist **David Brainard Spooner** led an excavation at **Shaji-ki-Dheri**. Beneath the stupa's foundation, they discovered a **reliquary** made of **bronze** and **copper**, containing:

- **Three bone fragments** believed to be Buddha's relics.
- The reliquary bore an inscription dating to **127 CE**, the first year of **Kanishka's reign**.

Relic Distribution

The relics were distributed as follows:

- **Mandalay, Myanmar**: Three fragments were sent (believed to be purchased by a Burmese donor).
- **British Museum, London**: One set of relics was displayed alongside a replica of the reliquary.
- **Peshawar Museum, Pakistan**: The original Kanishka reliquary is still preserved here.

Architectural Marvel

The **Kanishka Stupa** was an engineering masterpiece:

- A **three-tiered structure** featuring **spiral staircases** and **timber supports**.
- The central dome was supported by a network of **gold-plated copper umbrellas**.
- Advanced **lightning rods** were integrated to protect against strikes—a rarity in ancient construction.

Legacy and Historical Importance

The stupa stood as a symbol of the Kushan Empire's power and the spread of Buddhism across Asia. The **Mahayana Buddhist tradition** flourished under Kanishka's patronage, with the emperor convening the **Fourth Buddhist Council** to codify Mahayana teachings.

The **Kanishka Stupa** remains a key historical site, reflecting the grandeur of ancient Buddhist architecture and the devotion of the Kushan emperors to preserving the Buddha's relics. Despite its current state of ruin, the stupa's legacy endures through the relics housed in museums and Buddhist shrines around the world.

The Kanishka Stupa represents the zenith of Gandharan Buddhist architecture and stands as a testament to the spiritual vision of Emperor Kanishka. Its relics and architectural innovations contribute to our understanding of the religious and cultural landscape of ancient Gandhara. Efforts to preserve and study the stupa's legacy continue to underscore its importance as a symbol of Buddhist devotion and imperial grandeur.

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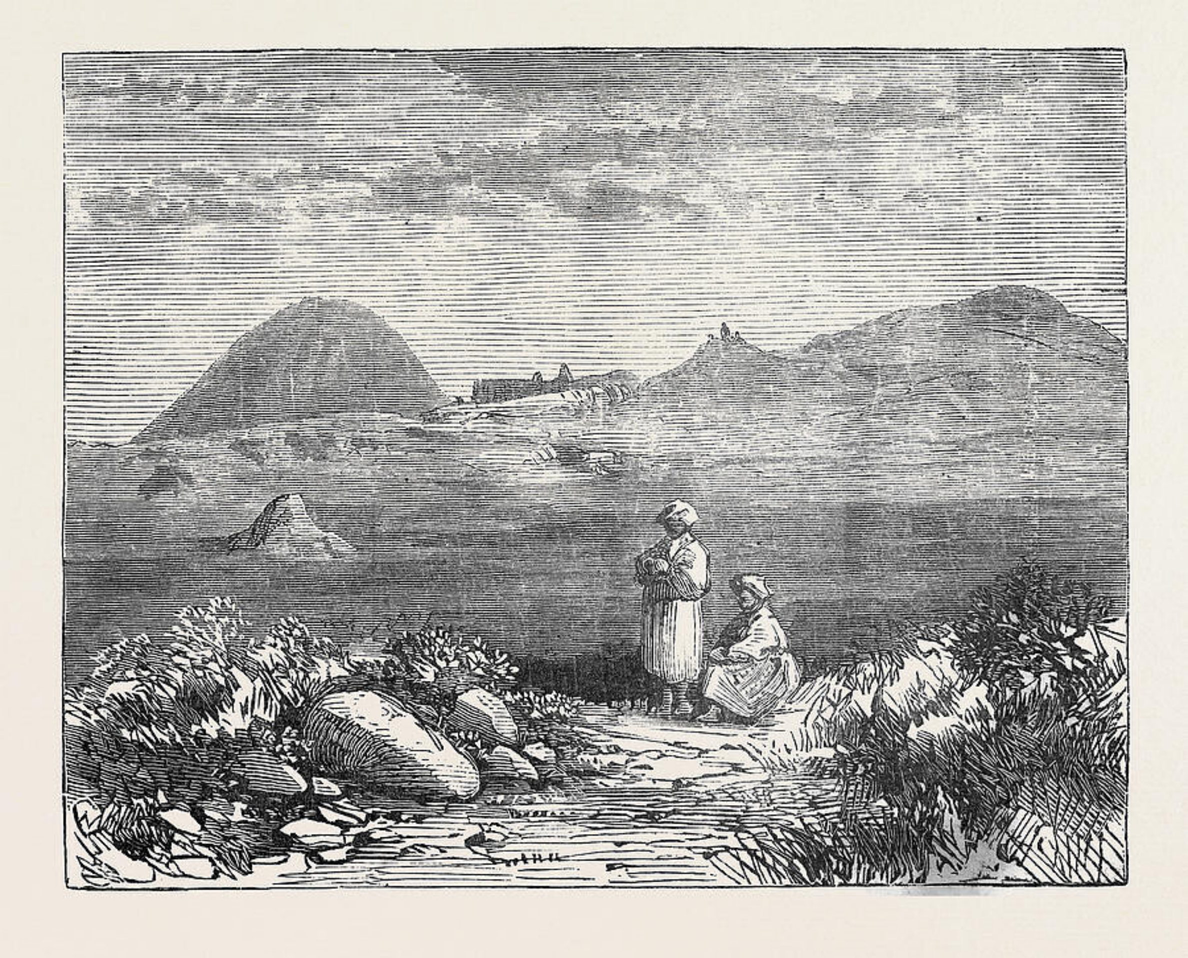

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20. Takht-i-Bahi Stupa: The Monastic Crown Jewel of Gandhara

1. Historical Background

The **Takht-i-Bahi Monastic Complex**, often referred to as the **"Spring Throne" Stupa**, is located in **Mardan**, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It is an ancient Buddhist monastic site that dates back to the **1st century CE** and remained active until the **7th century CE**. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was a center for spiritual learning and a hallmark of Gandharan architectural excellence. The site derives its name from the **Pashto words "Takht"** (meaning "throne" or "hilltop") and **"Bahi"** (meaning "spring"), likely referencing the springs found near the hilltop on which the complex is situated.

Local legends and historical records suggest that the "Throne of the Spring" name might also be linked to the presence of revered water springs near the monastic site, reinforcing its sacred significance.

The monastic site was possibly first built during the reign of **King Gondophares** (20–46 CE), a prominent Indo-Parthian ruler. Later, the site flourished under the patronage of **Kujula Kadphises**, the founder of the **Kushan Dynasty**, and his successors, particularly during the reigns of **Kanishka I** and **Huvishka**.

The complex expanded in multiple phases over the centuries and faced significant destruction during the **Hephthalite (White Hun) invasions** in the 5th century CE. Despite this, it continued to be used sporadically until the 7th century CE. The monastic complex was rediscovered in **1836** by French officials and excavated by the British in the mid-19th century.

2. Relics Enshrined

Excavations at Takht-i-Bahi have revealed numerous relics, including **statuary, architectural fragments**, and an **inscribed reliquary casket** believed to contain fragments of the Buddha's **tooth relic**. Many of these finds are preserved in international museums such as the **British Museum** and the **Musée Guimet** in Paris.

Key Relics Discovered

- **Tooth relic**: A sacred tooth relic believed to belong to the Buddha is reportedly housed in the **Louvre Museum**, Paris, as noted by scholars like **Elizabeth Errington**.
- **Reliquary caskets**: Silver and gold reliquaries inscribed with dedications by Kushan emperors.
- **Stone sculptures**: Life-sized Buddha figures, Bodhisattva statues, and scenes depicting the Buddha's life.

Table of Relics Found

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth relic	Believed to be housed in Paris' Musée Guimet
Caskets	Intricate reliquary caskets inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī
Statuary	Buddha statues, Bodhisattvas, and narrative panels

3. Archaeological Findings

Systematic excavations began in **1864** under British supervision. Key discoveries include:

- **Stupa courtyards**: Several stupas were found clustered around open courtyards with central platforms for ritual circumambulation.
- **Monastic cells**: Small meditation chambers arranged in rows, reflecting the monastic lifestyle of ancient Buddhist communities.
- **Main assembly hall**: A large hall used for communal gatherings and teachings.

Structural Features

The Takht-i-Bahi complex is celebrated for its **Gandharan architectural ingenuity**, blending local and Hellenistic influences:

- **Main stupa**: A towering stupa with intricately carved stone panels and multiple smaller votive stupas surrounding it.
- **Meditation chambers**: Built along the hill slopes, connected by stone staircases.
- **Sanctuaries and votive niches**: Niche spaces that held statues and offerings.

4. Cultural and Spiritual Significance

Takht-i-Bahi was an important center for Buddhist education and religious practice, serving as a pivotal institution for both Mahayana and early Theravada traditions. Monks from as far as **Kashmir, Bactria**, and **China** visited the monastery for study and pilgrimage.

The **relics** housed at Takht-i-Bahi symbolized the physical and spiritual presence of the Buddha, reinforcing the significance of relic veneration in Gandharan Buddhism. Pilgrims offered prayers and circumambulated the stupas in hopes of gaining merit and enlightenment.

The site's strategic location on a hilltop not only offered protection from invaders but also signified the elevated status of Buddhist teachings and the pursuit of spiritual ascension.

5. Comparative Analysis

When compared to other monastic complexes such as **Sanchi** or **Dharmarajika**, the Takht-i-Bahi complex stands out for its elevated layout and sophisticated water management systems. The presence of a water spring at the top of the hill enhanced its symbolic association with purity and spiritual renewal.

In contrast to the hemispherical stupas of Central India, the stupas at Takht-i-Bahi featured **multiple-tiered platforms** and **decorative friezes**, characteristic of Gandharan art's synthesis of **Greco-Roman and Indian styles**.

6. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Takht-i-Bahi has undergone significant conservation efforts, particularly since its inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage List in 1980**. However, the site continues to face challenges:

- **Environmental degradation**: The hilltop location exposes the complex to erosion and weathering.
- **Looting**: In the early excavations, many relics were removed and taken to international museums, leading to the dispersal of valuable artifacts.
- **Security concerns**: Due to regional instability, consistent preservation efforts have been difficult to maintain.

Despite these challenges, Takht-i-Bahi remains a symbol of Pakistan's rich Buddhist heritage. Continued archaeological work and conservation projects aim to preserve the site's spiritual and historical legacy.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Takht-i-Bahi (Throne of Water Spring Monastery)

Takht-i-Bahi, located near **Mardan** in **Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa**, Pakistan, is an ancient **Buddhist monastic complex** dating back to the **1st century CE**. This UNESCO World Heritage Site, inscribed in **1980**, is regarded as one of the most well-preserved **Indo-Parthian** archaeological sites and was a center of Buddhist learning in the **Gandhara region**.

Etymology and Historical Background

The name "Takht-i-Bahi" derives from the **Persian words**:

- *Takht* – meaning "throne" or "platform."
- *Bahi* – meaning "spring" or "water source."

This translates to **"Spring of the Throne"** or **"Throne of the Water Spring"**, possibly referring to two natural springs in the area.

An alternative interpretation links the name to the **mythical water throne** in the surrounding hills, with some locals believing that a royal platform existed here due to the monastery's elevated location.

Founding and Expansion

- The monastery was likely founded during the reign of **Gondophares** (20–46 CE), the **Indo-Parthian king** mentioned in Christian and Buddhist texts.
- After Gondophares, the region came under the rule of the **Kushan Empire**, beginning with **Kujula Kadphises**.

Significant Development Periods:

- **2nd to 4th Century CE:** The monastery flourished under **Kanishka I** and subsequent Kushan rulers.
- **4th to 5th Century CE:** The **Kidara Kushanas** continued to expand the site by constructing additional monastic buildings and stupas.
- **Mid-5th Century CE:** The Huns, led by **Toramana** and **Mihirakula**, launched brutal campaigns against Buddhists, destroying monasteries and massacring monks in the Gandhara region.
- Despite destruction, **Takht-i-Bahi** was likely reoccupied and used until the **7th century CE**.

Structure and Layout

The monastery sits atop a **hill** with a panoramic view of the Gandhara plains. The complex is divided into key sections:

- **Main Stupa Court:**
    1. A central area with a large **stupa** surrounded by smaller votive stupas.
    2. Likely used for rituals and public gatherings.
- **Monastic Cells:**
    1. Individual meditation chambers for monks.
    2. The cells were simple but strategically positioned for quiet contemplation.
- **Assembly Hall:**
    1. A spacious hall used for meetings and teachings.
    2. Scholars and disciples would convene here for lectures on Buddhist philosophy.
- **Meditation Chambers:**
    1. Private rooms designed for intensive meditation.
- **Water Reservoirs and Springs:**
    1. The site's name references the natural springs that provided water for the monastery.

The architectural layout reflects the grandeur of **Kushan-era** Buddhist architecture, showcasing **Indo-Greek** and **Indo-Parthian** influences.

Rediscovery and Excavations

- In **1836**, a French military officer discovered a **Buddhist statue** near the village of **Mazdoorabad**.
- Formal excavations began in **1864** under the **British archaeological mission**.
- Artefacts, including **statues** and **relics**, were transferred to the **British Museum** and **Paris' Louvre Museum**.
- Reports indicate that **Buddha's relics (tooth)** may have been among the findings, later stored at the **Louvre Museum**, according to scholar **Elizabeth Errington**.

Preservation and Restoration

- Major conservation efforts were conducted in the **1920s** to protect the site.
- The monastery remains one of the few surviving **Gandhara Buddhist** sites that retain a significant portion of their original architecture.

In **1980**, **UNESCO** designated **Takht-i-Bahi** as a **World Heritage Site** for its cultural and historical significance. It continues to be a major site for scholars and tourists interested in Buddhist heritage and ancient Gandhara civilization.

Cultural Significance

Takht-i-Bahi was not only a monastery but also a prominent **educational hub** for monks and pilgrims. The complex symbolizes the spread of **Mahayana Buddhism** and its teachings throughout **South Asia**. Pilgrims such as the Chinese monk **Xuanzang** noted in his travelogues that the site was visited by Buddhist devotees, especially those seeking healing from **vision-related ailments**, reflecting the belief in the monastery's sanctity and spiritual powers.

The site's **artefacts and relics** found in **international museums** remain a source of cultural pride but also of historical contention regarding the ownership and repatriation of Gandhara treasures.

Current Status:Takht-i-Bahi is well-maintained and remains a prominent symbol of **Buddhist history in Pakistan**. Visitors from around the world continue to explore its ruins, fascinated by its history, stunning hilltop views, and enduring legacy as a center of Buddhist thought and practice.

Takht-i-Bahi stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of Gandharan Buddhism and the Kushan Empire's patronage of religious and architectural innovation. The site's relics and monastic structures offer invaluable insights into the spiritual and cultural dynamics of ancient Gandhara. As a beacon of Buddhist faith, the Takht-i-Bahi complex continues to inspire scholars, pilgrims, and tourists alike, embodying the timeless quest for enlightenment.

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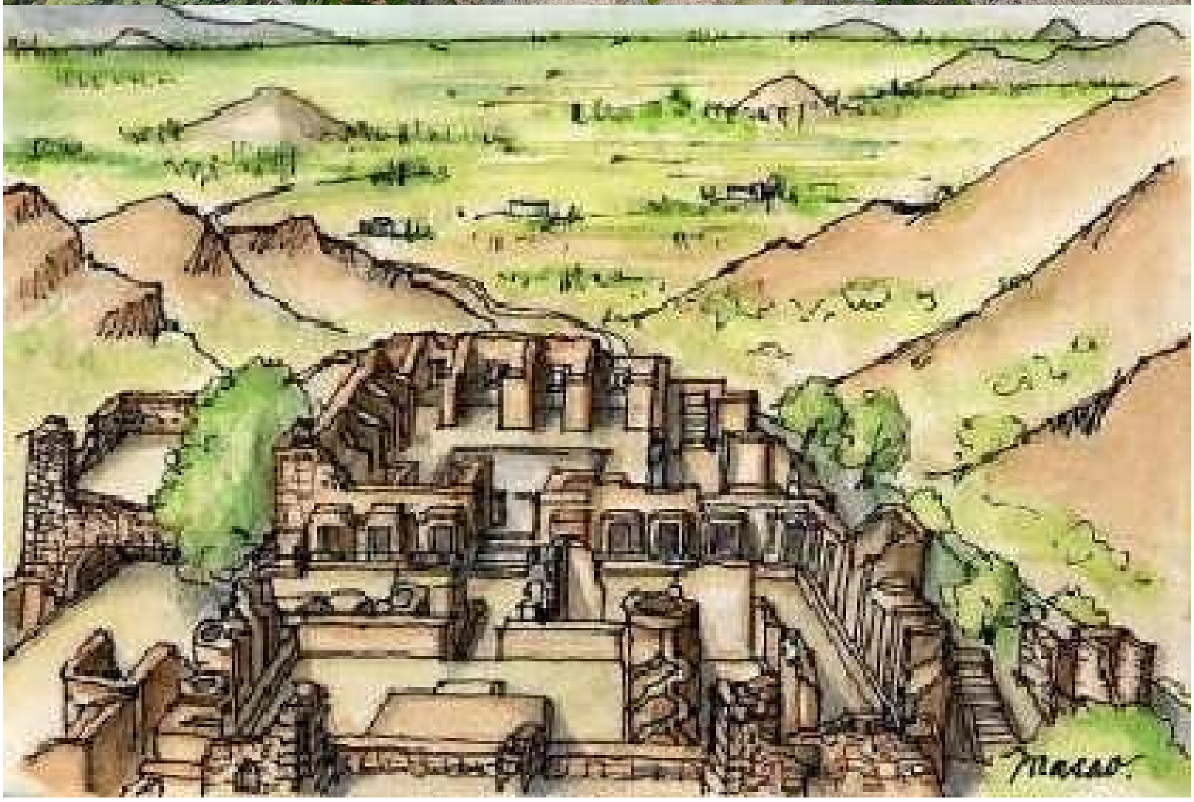
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21. Butkara Stupa: A Testament to Ashoka's Devotion in Swat Valley

1. Historical Background

The **Butkara Stupa**, located near **Mingora** in the **Swat Valley** of Pakistan, stands as a significant testament to Emperor Ashoka's commitment to spreading Buddhism during the **Mauryan Empire**. This monumental stupa was built in the **2nd century BCE** and was expanded and renovated at least **five times** over the centuries.

Excavations led by the **Italian Archaeological Mission (IsIAO)**, headed by **Domenico Faccenna** in **1956**, uncovered the complex's historical layers and revealed its Gandharan-Hellenistic architectural elements. The stupa is a prime example of the blending of **Indian Buddhist traditions** with **Hellenistic influences**. This synthesis reflects the Indo-Greek rulers' influence in the region during the post-Ashokan period, emphasizing their active role in fostering Buddhist art and architecture.

2. Details of the Relics

The Butkara Stupa is notable for the discovery of sacred relics and votive objects within its **reliquary chamber**. Among the most remarkable finds is a **golden reliquary** containing **a tooth relic** believed to be a remnant of the Buddha himself.

Key Relics Unearthed:

- **Tooth relic**: Found encased in golden and silver leaves shaped like a **bodhi leaf**.
- **Azes II coin**: A coin bearing the image of **Azes II**, an Indo-Scythian ruler, was found alongside the relics.
- **Youth sculpture holding the tooth relic**: A unique **sculpture of a youth holding a reliquary** depicts a figure representing **Kapilavastu or Kausambi**, symbolizing Buddhist veneration of the relic.
- **Stone votive stupas**: Miniature stupas used for private worship by monks and devotees.

These relics highlight the stupa's role as a center for relic veneration and pilgrimage.

Table of Key Relics Found

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth Relic	Believed to be part of the Buddha's physical remains
Azes II Coin	Indo-Scythian coin dating to the **1st century BCE**
Youth Sculpture	A Hellenistic-style sculpture of a relic bearer
Votive Stupas	Stone stupas used in private veneration

3. Architectural Features

The Butkara Stupa's architectural design reflects its multiple phases of renovation, blending **Ashokan, Gandharan, and Hellenistic influences**.

Notable Features:

- **Original Core Stupa**: The central structure was built during Ashoka's reign and expanded several times.
- **Stupa Dome**: The dome was constructed using **local stone blocks** and was encased in **stucco plaster** to create intricate decorative patterns.
- **Hellenistic influence**: Corinthian-style capitals and figurative sculptures indicate the influence of **Greek art**.
- **Circular procession path**: A circumambulatory path around the stupa enabled devotees to perform **pradakshina (ritual circumambulation)**.

Comparison with Hellenistic Fortifications

The layout of Butkara I's complex has drawn comparisons to **Hellenistic fortifications** due to its concentric circular walls, resembling defensive city walls of **Bactria** and **Greco-Roman sites**.

4. Cultural and Religious Significance

The Butkara Stupa held immense religious significance as a center for pilgrimage and relic worship. It served as a major institution for Buddhist monks and was part of a larger monastic network in **Gandhara**. The veneration of the **Buddha's tooth relic** attracted pilgrims from distant regions, reflecting the spread of Buddhist devotional practices along the **Silk Road**.

The discovery of votive stupas and inscribed reliquaries suggests that monks and lay devotees made offerings to accumulate spiritual merit. The site also symbolizes the cross-cultural exchange that defined the Swat Valley as a **melting pot of Buddhist, Hellenistic, and Central Asian cultures**.

5. Comparative Analysis: Butkara Stupa vs. Other Ashokan Stupas

The Butkara Stupa shares similarities with other Ashokan stupas such as the **Dharmarajika Stupa (Taxila)** and **Sanchi Stupa**:

Feature	**Butkara Stupa (Swat)**	**Dharmarajika Stupa (Taxila)**	**Sanchi Stupa (India)**
Relic Type	Tooth relic	Buddha bone relics	Ashes of the Buddha
Architectural Style	Gandharan-Hellenistic	Gandharan	Mauryan with later additions
Stupa Dome	Enlarged multiple times	Large hemispherical dome	Hemispherical dome
Decorations	Stucco reliefs, Greek motifs	Gandharan panels	Jataka relief carvings

6. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Despite significant archaeological efforts, the Butkara Stupa faces ongoing challenges:

- **Looting and Displacement**: Some relics and artifacts from the site were removed to **international museums**, including the **Turin Museum of Ancient Art** in Italy.
- **Environmental Factors**: The Swat Valley's climate and natural disasters have led to the erosion of some structures.
- **Security Issues**: Due to regional instability, preservation and conservation efforts have faced interruptions.

However, the **IsIAO (Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient)** continues to lead conservation initiatives to safeguard the site's heritage.

7. Summarize findings of the research

Butkara Stupa, located near **Mingora** in the **Swat Valley**, Pakistan, is an ancient and highly significant **Buddhist stupa** originally constructed by the **Mauryan Emperor Ashoka** during the **3rd century BCE**. This stupa served as a prominent center for Buddhist religious and cultural activities in **Gandhara**.

Historical Timeline and Architecture

- **3rd Century BCE:** The original stupa was constructed during Ashoka's reign as part of his effort to spread Buddhism throughout his empire.
- **2nd Century BCE to 1st Century CE:** The stupa underwent **five phases of reconstruction and expansion**, with additional layers added over the centuries, reflecting changing architectural styles.
- The stupa displays a fusion of **Hellenistic and Gandhara architectural styles**, characterized by its use of Greek motifs, Indo-Greek columns, and decorative sculptures.
- The reconstruction phases indicate that the stupa was continually revered and maintained by various rulers, including **Indo-Greek** and **Kushan** dynasties.

Key Discoveries from Excavations

- **Italian Archaeological Mission:**In **1956**, Italian archaeologist **Domenico Faccenna** and his team from the **Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIOAO)** led significant excavations of Butkara Stupa.
    1. Their findings confirmed the stupa's origins from the **Mauryan period** and revealed the influence of **Hellenistic culture**during subsequent expansions.
- **Indo-Greek Coins:**A coin attributed to **Azes II**, an Indo-Scythian king, was discovered within the relic chambers, indicating continued patronage from Indo-Scythian rulers.
- **Statue of a Youth:**A notable sculpture of a **young man holding Buddha's tooth relic**, found among **gold leaf ornaments**, suggests an artistic and cultural connection with **Indo-Corinthian** city-states and an early depiction of reverence for Buddha's relics.
    1. Scholars date the sculpture to around **20 BCE** and interpret it as a symbolic representation of the **veneration of Buddha's relics**.

Cultural Significance

The Butkara Stupa is believed to be part of the **spread of Greco-Buddhist culture** during the Indo-Greek rule, which combined Greek artistic traditions with Buddhist religious practices.

- The stupa's design and associated artefacts demonstrate the role of **Hellenistic urban centers** and **Indo-Greek rulers** in the promotion of Buddhist art and culture.
- The use of **Corinthian-style columns** and intricate **stucco decorations** exemplifies the artistic fusion that characterized the Gandhara region.

Relics and Preservation

- The **tooth relic** of Buddha, discovered in Butkara Stupa, was encased in **gold leaf sheets** and is considered one of the most significant finds.
- Several **relics, sculptures, and coins** unearthed from the stupa are now preserved at the **Museum of Oriental Art (M.A.O.)** in **Turin, Italy**.

These findings highlight the global significance of the site and its artefacts, reflecting a rich history of cultural exchange and religious devotion.

Current Status and Legacy

The Butkara Stupa remains an important archaeological site in the **Swat Valley**, attracting historians, archaeologists, and Buddhist pilgrims from around the world. Efforts to preserve the site continue, emphasizing its status as a crucial part of **Buddhist heritage in Gandhara**. The discoveries from Butkara have significantly contributed to our understanding of **Greco-Buddhist art** and the historical spread of Buddhism across **South Asia**.

The **Butkara Stupa** remains a vital part of Buddhist history, representing the cultural fusion of the Mauryan and Hellenistic worlds. The relics enshrined within its chambers and its enduring architectural grandeur highlight the spiritual and artistic achievements of ancient Gandhara. As an archaeological treasure, the stupa deepens our understanding of the spread of Buddhism and the cultural syncretism that defined the region.

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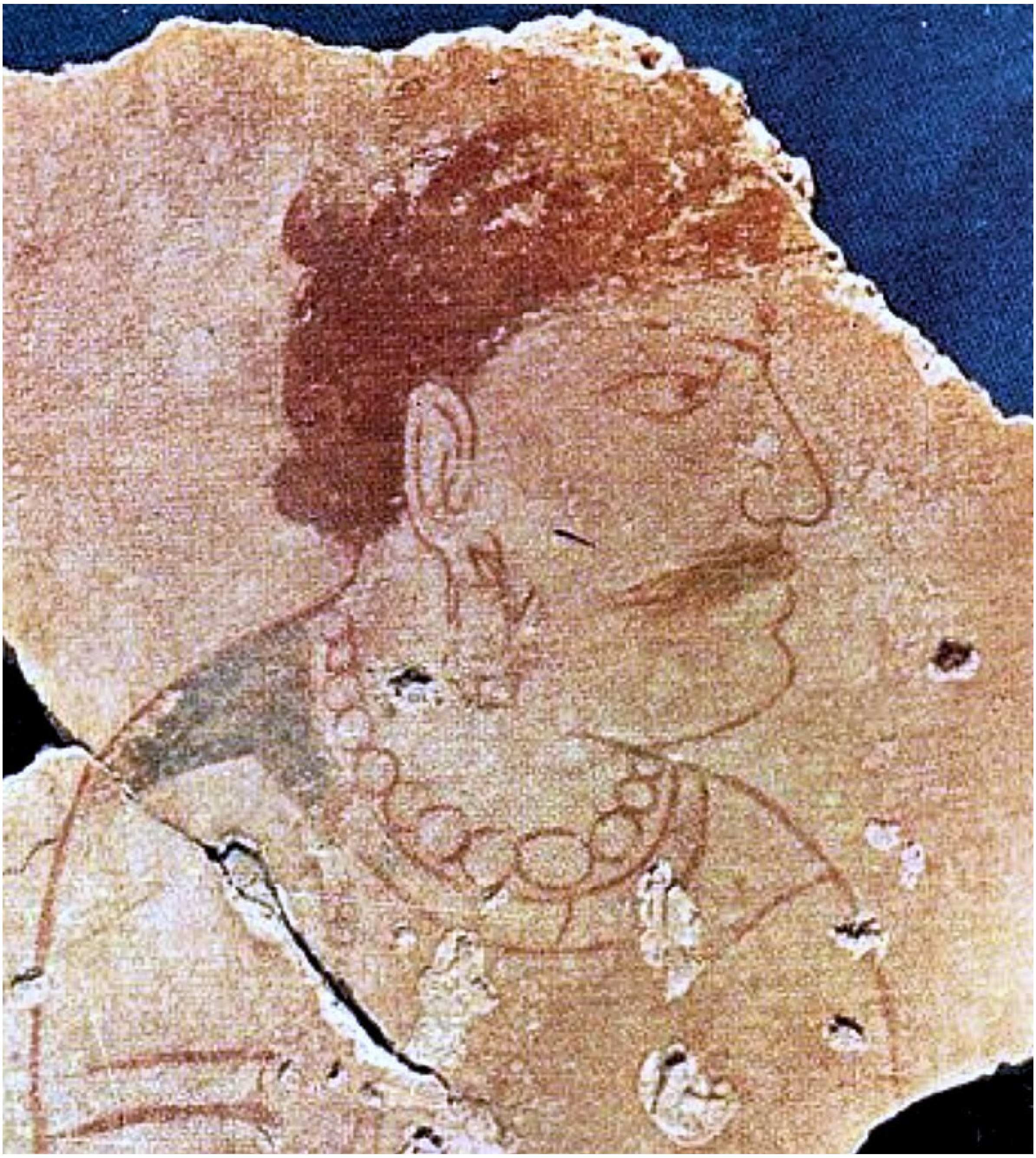

22. Sakawagunti Stupa: A Jewel of Buddhist Heritage in Hadda

1. Historical Background

The **Sakawagunti Stupa**, a relic stupa located at **Hadda** in eastern **Afghanistan**, is a prime example of **Gandharan Buddhist art**. Built in the **1st century CE**, the stupa was part of a larger monastic complex that once served as a significant Buddhist learning center in the region.

This stupa was commissioned by **Rajakuladevi**, the sister of **Aiyasi Kamuia** (believed to be a notable ruler or noblewoman), in honor of the **Buddha's relics**. She was accompanied in this act of devotion by her son, **Sadhana**. The commissioning of the stupa reflects the role of noblewomen in promoting and sustaining the Buddhist faith.

The **French archaeological mission** led by **Jules Barthou** rediscovered the stupa in **1928**. Their exploration revealed not only the remnants of the stupa but also a treasure trove of Gandharan sculptures, many of which have been preserved at **Musée Guimet** in Paris and the **Tokyo National Museum**.

2. Details of the Relics

The Sakawagunti Stupa is renowned for the discovery of **Buddha tooth relics** and associated artifacts that underscore its sacred purpose.

Key Relics Found:

- **Buddha's Tooth Relic**: A preserved fragment believed to have belonged to the Buddha.
- **Reliquary with inscriptions**: A small reliquary was found, inscribed with references to **Aiyasi Kamuia**'s lineage.
- **Jewelry and votive offerings**: Precious offerings, including intricate gold and silver ornaments.

The sacred relics were enshrined with great care, following traditional Buddhist practices of wrapping relics in **textiles** and encasing them in **stone reliquaries**.

Table of Key Relics

Type of Relic	Description
Buddha Tooth Relic	Housed in a reliquary, believed to be genuine
Inscribed Reliquary	References to Rajakuladevi's devotional act
Votive Jewelry	Gold and silver ornaments as devotional offerings

3. Cultural and Religious Significance

The Sakawagunti Stupa played a pivotal role in **Buddhist ritual life** at Hadda. The veneration of Buddha relics was central to Buddhist practice, as they symbolized the Buddha's continuing spiritual presence. The commissioning of the stupa by **Rajakuladevi** and **Sadhana** highlights the involvement of noble families in the construction of sacred sites and the spread of Buddhist teachings.

Hadda was a major pilgrimage center that attracted monks and scholars from Gandhara, Central Asia, and beyond. The stupa's relics provided spiritual merit to the patrons and visitors, reinforcing the doctrine of **dāna** (generosity).

4. Architectural Features

The **Sakawagunti Stupa** is an example of **Gandharan stupa design**, characterized by its use of **schist stone** and intricate carvings.

Key Architectural Elements:

- **Base Structure**: The stupa had a **circular drum** topped with a **hemispherical dome**.
- **Stone Carvings**: The exterior of the stupa featured **Bodhisattva reliefs** and **narrative panels** depicting scenes from the **Jataka tales**.
- **Votive Niches**: Small niches housed Buddha statues for veneration by visiting pilgrims.

The blend of **classical Greek influences**—evident in the draped figures and Corinthian-style capitals—with **Indian Buddhist motifs** underscores the **cross-cultural synthesis** that defined Hadda as a hub of Gandharan art.

5. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

Despite its historical importance, the **Sakawagunti Stupa** and the surrounding monastic complex faced significant challenges due to conflict and looting.

Key Challenges:

- **Destruction during conflicts**: Many archaeological sites in Hadda, including Sakawagunti, suffered damage during periods of conflict in Afghanistan.
- **Looting and displacement**: Several relics and sculptures were illegally removed and sold to private collections worldwide.
- **Preservation abroad**: Artifacts from the stupa are now displayed in the **Musée Guimet (Paris)** and the **Tokyo National Museum**, raising ongoing debates about cultural heritage repatriation.

Efforts by international institutions, including **UNESCO** and **French cultural missions**, continue to promote the conservation of the artifacts associated with Hadda's stupas.

6. Comparative Analysis: Sakawagunti Stupa vs. Hadda Stupa No. 10

Feature	**Sakawagunti Stupa**	**Hadda Stupa No. 10 (Great Stupa)**
Time Period	1st Century CE	4th-5th Century CE
Relic Type	Tooth relic	Unknown
Architectural Style	Gandharan	Gandharan with Hellenistic elements
Preservation Site	Musée Guimet, Paris	National Museum, Kabul

7. Summarize findings of the research

The **Sakka-Wagunti Stupa** is a small yet historically significant **stone stupa** located in the **Hadda archaeological region** of **eastern Afghanistan**. This site was once home to a prominent **Buddhist monastic complex**. The stupa is particularly notable for containing **relics of the Buddha's teeth**, making it an object of great reverence.

Historical Background

- The stupa was constructed in the **1st century CE** by **Rājakula Devi**, daughter of **Aiyasi Kamuia**, a known royal figure from the region. She dedicated the stupa along with her son **Sodhāna** as an offering to house the **Buddha's tooth relic**.
- The Hadda region was a significant Buddhist center in the ancient **Gandhara** region and hosted many stupas and monastic institutions that served as pilgrimage and learning sites for Buddhist practitioners.

Rediscovery and Excavation

- In **1928**, a **French archaeological mission** led by **Jules Barthou** rediscovered the Sakka-Wagunti Stupa during their exploration of the remnants of the **ancient Hadda monastery complex**.
- The mission collaborated with the **National Museum of Tokyo** and conducted conservation efforts to preserve the artefacts and architectural remnants.
- The stupa contained relic caskets, statues, and decorative elements showcasing the artistic mastery of **Gandhara artisans**.

Architectural and Artistic Significance

- The stupa was carved from **stone** and adorned with intricate designs, including sculptures depicting **Buddhist iconography**.
- The relic chamber housed a variety of **stupa reliquaries**, including a **tooth relic of the Buddha**, surrounded by offerings made of precious materials.
- The stupa represents a blend of **Indian, Persian, and Greek artistic influences**, characteristic of the **Gandhara school of art**.

Preservation and Current Location

- The artefacts and relics from the Sakka-Wagunti Stupa were transported to **Musée Guimet** in **Paris**, where they are still displayed today as part of the museum's renowned Gandhara collection.
- Despite the political and military conflicts in Afghanistan, the discovery of the Sakka-Wagunti Stupa remains a testament to the cultural and religious significance of the region during the height of Buddhist influence in Central Asia.

Legacy

The Sakka-Wagunti Stupa stands as an enduring symbol of the devotion of Buddhist patrons and the widespread veneration of Buddha relics. The stupa's rediscovery contributed valuable insights into the history of **Hadda** and the broader Buddhist traditions in the **Gandhara** region. The artefacts preserved in **Musée Guimet** continue to captivate historians, archaeologists, and visitors, reflecting the lasting legacy of Buddhism in the ancient world.

The **Sakawagunti Stupa** stands as a symbol of the rich Buddhist heritage of **Hadda** and the devotional piety of **Rajakuladevi**. Its relics and intricate carvings offer a glimpse into the sacred traditions of relic veneration and the cultural syncretism that characterized the region. Today, the stupa's relics preserved in **Paris** and **Tokyo** remind us of the enduring legacy of Buddhist art and the ongoing efforts to protect and celebrate the treasures of Gandhara.

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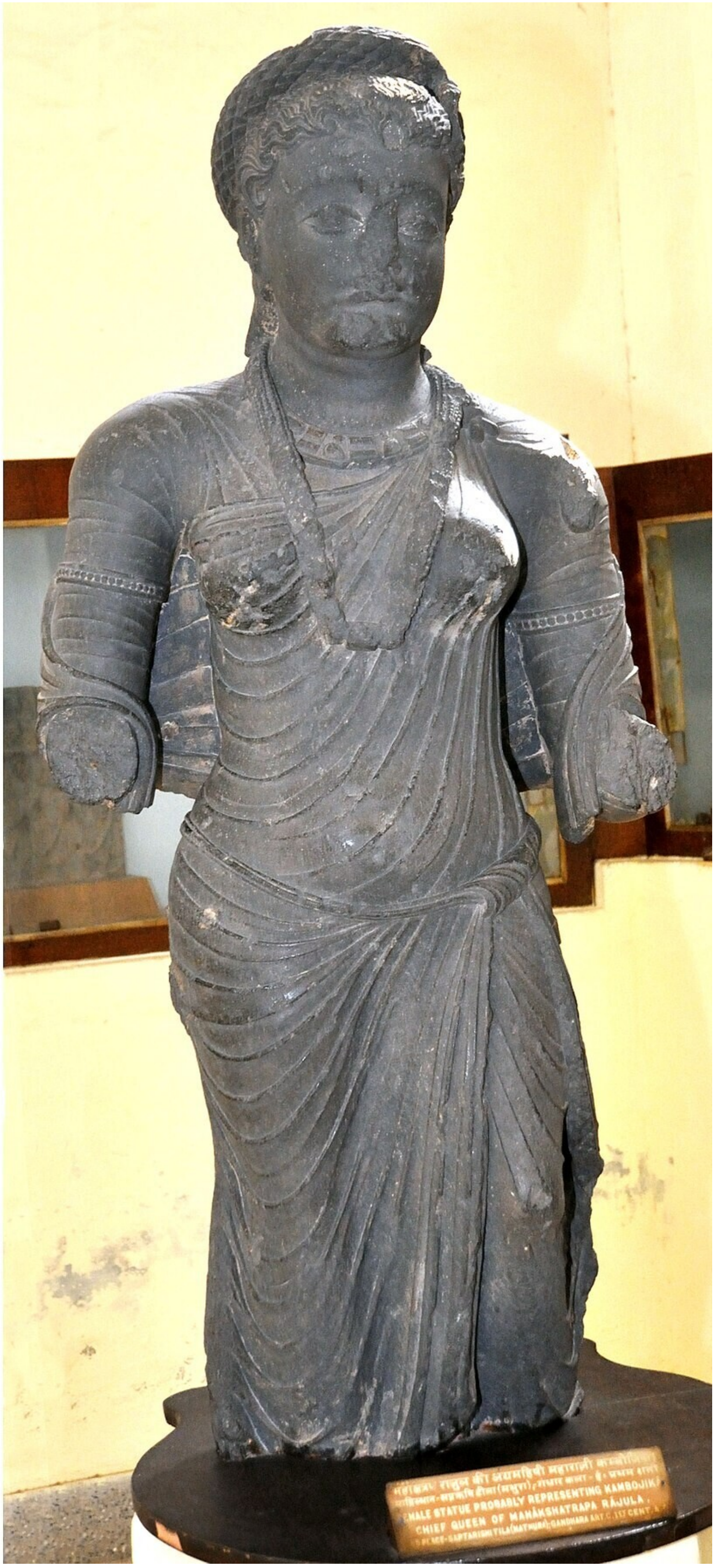
MALE STATUE PROBABLY REPRESENTING KAMBOJIK
CHIEF QUEEN OF MAHAKSHATRAPA RĀJULA ,
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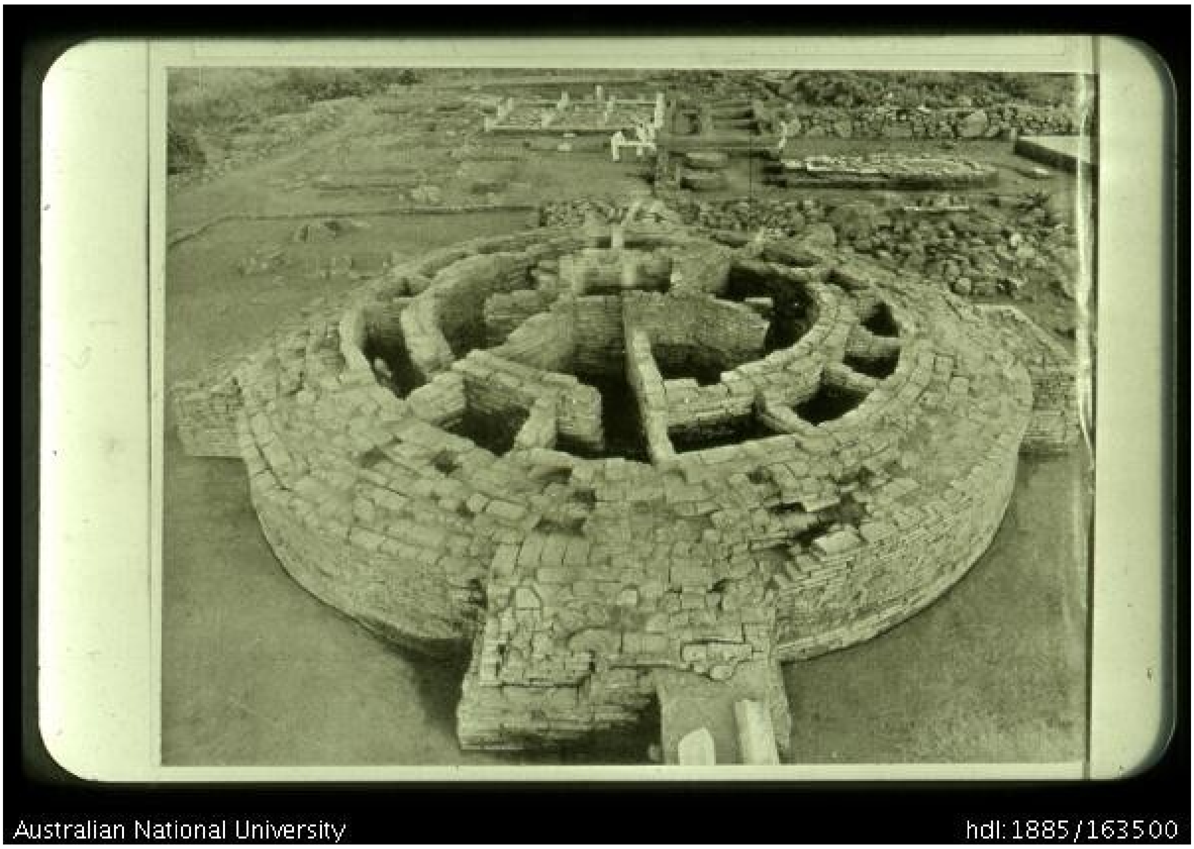

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23. Singaṭa Stupa: A Sacred Monument of the Swat Valley

1. Introduction

The **Singaṭa Stupa** is located along the **left bank of the Swat River**, approximately 14 kilometers south of **Mingora**, in the Swat Valley. It is one of the many significant Buddhist monuments in the region, dating back to the era when the valley was a thriving center of Buddhism and Gandharan art. The stupa is traditionally associated with **King Uttarasena**, who is said to have built it to enshrine relics of the **Buddha’s tooth and ashes**.

According to local legends and ancient texts, this sacred site also holds cultural and mythological importance. The story of the **white elephant**, believed to have carried the Buddha's relics and turned to stone at this location, is an integral part of the stupa's history【Deane, 1886; Stein, 1930】.

2. Details of the Relics

The **Singaṭa Stupa** is renowned for its relics associated with the **Buddha’s remains**, which include:

- **Buddha’s tooth relic**: Enshrined within the stupa in a golden reliquary.
- **Bone fragments and ashes**: Believed to be authentic relics, carried in a precious urn.

Key Relics Discovered:

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth Relic	Preserved within a golden urn, believed to be genuine
Ashes and Bone Fragments	Symbolized the Buddha's physical and spiritual presence
Elephant-shaped Stone	Said to have formed when the white elephant collapsed

The relics were stored in an elaborate reliquary placed at the center of the stupa, symbolizing the Buddha's **Parinirvana** (final release).

3. Cultural and Religious Significance

The **Singaṭa Stupa** serves as a testament to the enduring devotion of King **Uttarasena** and the Swat region's importance in the spread of Buddhism.

According to legend:

- King **Uttarasena**, believed to be a descendant of the **Sakya** clan (the Buddha's family), was urged by his mother to bring back a part of the Buddha's relics.
- He is said to have visited **Kusinara** (modern Kushinagar), where he obtained a portion of the relics after negotiating with other kings who had gathered for the Buddha's cremation.
- The story recounts how a **white elephant** carried the relics and collapsed at **Singaṭa**, turning to stone, thus marking the site's spiritual significance.

Symbolism of the Elephant:

In **Buddhist tradition**, elephants often symbolize **strength, patience, and wisdom**. The transformation of the elephant into stone is interpreted as a sign of the relics’ divine power and the sanctity of the location.

4. Architectural Features

The **Singaṭa Stupa** exemplifies **early Gandharan stupa architecture**, blending **Mauryan stonework** with **local craftsmanship**.

Architectural Elements:

- **Square Base**: The original base of the stupa was a **square platform**, surrounded by layers of dressed stone.
- **Circular Dome**: The dome was constructed of **stacked stone slabs**, reflecting the classical stupa design.
- **Stone Reliefs**: The stupa’s structure included **niches** for Buddha statues and carvings depicting scenes from the **Buddha’s life**.
- **Stepped Pathway**: Pilgrims ascended the stupa via a series of stone steps, which have partially survived.

Unfortunately, much of the original structure was dismantled by locals who reused the stones for constructing homes and roads.

5. Comparative Analysis: Singaṭa Stupa vs. Butkara Stupa

Feature	**Singaṭa Stupa**	**Butkara Stupa**
Time Period	7th Century CE	3rd Century BCE to 2nd Century CE
Key Patron	King Uttarasena	Mauryan Emperor Ashoka
Relic Type	Tooth relic, ashes	Ashes, bone fragments
Architectural Style	Gandharan	Gandharan with Hellenistic elements
Mythological Connection	White elephant legend	None

6. Preservation Efforts and Challenges

The **Singaṭa Stupa** faced significant challenges over the centuries:

- **Erosion and looting**: The site suffered from natural erosion and the removal of stone blocks for local construction.
- **Conflict and neglect**: The Swat Valley, due to its strategic location, was impacted by regional conflicts that further damaged archaeological sites.
- **Rediscovery and research**: Efforts by archaeologists like **G. Tucci** in the **20th century** have helped document the site's historical narrative.

Key findings from the site, including the **stone elephant** and sculptures, are preserved at the **Louvre Museum** and other international collections.

7. Summarize findings of the research

The **Thinga Stupa** is an ancient Buddhist stupa located on the **left bank of the Swat River**, approximately **14 kilometers** south of **Mingora** in the **Swat Valley**. This stupa holds significant historical and cultural importance as one of the oldest Buddhist monuments in the region, constructed to enshrine **Buddha's tooth relic** and other sacred remains. The construction was attributed to **King Uttarasena**, a prominent ruler associated with local legends and Buddhist history.

Historical Background and Legend

According to local tradition:

- The stupa was built after an **elephant** carrying the **Buddha's relics** slipped and tragically died upon reaching the location.
- The elephant is said to have **turned to stone**, and the king, in reverence, constructed the **Thinga Stupa** on this spot.
- This story is recorded by early travelers and historians such as **Deane (1886)** and **Stein (1930)**.

The legend of **King Uttarasena**:

- King Uttarasena, believed to be a descendant of the **Shakya** clan, heard stories of the **Buddha's relics** and decided to obtain the sacred remains from **Kusinara** after the Buddha's **Parinibbāna** (passing away).
- His mother, a **Nāga queen**, encouraged him to claim the relics as his rightful inheritance.
- Upon reaching **Kusinara**, King Uttarasena presented his case to the **Malla kings** and was granted some relics after the intervention of **Ananda Thera**, the Buddha's disciple.
- Among the relics were the **Buddha's tooth, rib bone, and hair relics**, which the king brought back to the Swat Valley.

Construction of the Stupa

- The original stupa was built using **large stone slabs and layers of rock**, forming a robust square-shaped base.
- The structure was expanded several times, indicating the stupa's religious and cultural importance in the region.
- During subsequent years, local inhabitants dismantled parts of the stupa for **building homes** and **roads**, resulting in significant degradation of the original structure.

Archaeological Findings and Research

- In the **7th century CE**, the Chinese pilgrim **Xuanzang (Hieun Tsang)** visited Swat and recorded his visit to a stupa dedicated to the **Buddha's tooth relic**. He also referenced the story of the elephant that transformed into stone.
- **G. Tucci**, a renowned archaeologist, suggested that the stupa site may have been **500 meters north** of the current **Kotao village**, where ruins of another stupa were found.
- Tucci argued that **Uttarasena** may not have built the specific stupa associated with the legend and called for further research into the relic's true location.

Significance in Buddhist Tradition

The Thinga Stupa is revered as a relic site where devotees believed that worshiping the **Buddha's tooth relic** could cure ailments, especially eye diseases. Pilgrims from across the region visited the site to seek blessings and healing.

Current Condition

- The remnants of the original stupa were significantly damaged due to the extraction of stones by villagers for construction purposes.
- Many of the stupa's architectural components were repurposed, leading to the loss of its original form.
- However, archaeological efforts have preserved some of the associated relics and artefacts, which are displayed in museums such as the **Louvre in Paris**.

The **Singaṭa Stupa** holds a prominent place in the Buddhist heritage of the Swat Valley, reflecting the religious devotion of **King Uttarasena** and the spiritual connection of the region to the Buddha's relics. Its mythological association with the **white elephant** adds a unique layer of cultural symbolism. While much of the stupa has been lost to time, its story continues to inspire archaeological inquiry and efforts toward the preservation of Gandharan Buddhist heritage.

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24. Namo Ghan Stupa: A Testament to King Suviṣṭhaka's Devotion

1. Introduction

The **Namo Ghan Stupa**, also known as the **Sindhu Thari Stupa**, is located in the **Swat Valley** near the **right bank of the Swat River**, 45 kilometers west of the **Sindhu River** and 22 kilometers from **Bagh Village**. This historic site is set amidst the lush natural beauty and cultural richness of the Swat Valley, an area previously known as the ancient **Uddiyana Kingdom**. The stupa is attributed to **King Suviṣṭhaka**, a ruler whose influence extended from **Balkh** in **Bactria** to **Mathura** in **India**.

The discovery of royal coins and inscriptions across these regions supports the theory of **Suviṣṭhaka’s** expansive empire. Notably, at the **Bodhi Tree** in **Bodh Gaya**, inscriptions of **Suviṣṭhaka’s gold coins** have also been found, further attesting to his reverence for Buddhism and the Buddha’s enlightenment【Rezakhani, 2017】.

2. Details of the Relics

The **Namo Ghan Stupa** is notable for its association with relics from **Nava Vihara in Balkh**, including:

- **Buddha’s tooth and hair relics**: Believed to have been enshrined after being retrieved from **Nava Vihara**.
- **Bone fragments and ashes**: These relics were said to have been preserved in exquisite reliquaries.

Key Findings:

Type of Relic	Description
Tooth and Hair Relics	Symbolized the Buddha's blessings and connection to Balkh
Gem-Studded Reliquaries	Precious stones and metals adorned the relic caskets
Scytho-Parthian Coins	Coinage from the **Scytho-Parthian** era, indicating cross-cultural ties
Pottery and Bowls	**Ceramic bowls** and **storage jars** discovered nearby

The site also contained intricately carved panels that depicted **Buddhist Jataka tales** (stories of the Buddha's past lives), further showcasing the craftsmanship of the era.

3. Cultural and Religious Significance

The **Namo Ghan Stupa** reflects King **Suviṣṭhaka's** deep devotion to Buddhism and his legacy as a protector of the Buddha's relics:

- **Historical Context**: After conquering **Balkh**, King **Suviṣṭhaka** acquired relics from the famous **Nava Vihara Monastery**.
- **Spiritual Significance**: The establishment of the **Namo Ghan Stupa** signified the king's reverence for relic veneration and his commitment to spreading Buddhism across his kingdom.

The Symbolism of the Stupa:

The name **"Namo Ghan"** translates to "Homage to the Buddha," indicating the stupa's purpose as a center of worship. The stupa's grand structure symbolized the **Buddha's enlightenment** and the king's role as a devout supporter of Buddhism.

4. Architectural Features

The **Namo Ghan Stupa** is a prime example of **Scytho-Parthian Buddhist architecture**, blending elements of **Gandharan** design with regional influences.

Key Architectural Elements:

- **Three Main Stupas**: The complex features **three primary stupas** aligned from **north to south**, flanked by **56 smaller stupas**.
- **Central Monastery**: A monastery complex was discovered west of the main stupa, indicating a thriving monastic community.
- **Carved Panels**: The panels depicted stories from the Buddha's life and past incarnations, showcasing intricate **stonework**.
- **Stone and Brick Layers**: The stupas were constructed using alternating layers of stone and brick, reinforced with plaster.

The **main stupa** is surrounded by smaller votive stupas, each containing miniature **Buddha sculptures** and votive offerings.

5. Comparative Analysis: Namo Ghan Stupa vs. Butkara I Stupa

Feature	Namo Ghan Stupa	Butkara I Stupa
Key Patron	King Suviṣṭhaka	Mauryan Emperor Ashoka
Relic Types	Tooth, hair, ashes	Bone fragments, ashes
Monastery Complex	Yes	Yes
Cultural Influence	Scytho-Parthian and Bactrian	Hellenistic and Mauryan

6. Excavation and Preservation

The **Namo Ghan Stupa** was excavated by renowned archaeologists:

- **Aurel Stein**: Conducted surveys and documented the site in his records.
- **Giuseppe Tucci (1966)**: An Italian archaeologist who led a thorough excavation of the site in **1967-1968**.

The excavations revealed numerous significant relics, including **royal coins**, **gems**, and **pottery**. Artifacts discovered at the site are now displayed at the **Swat Museum**, preserving the legacy of the **Gandharan Buddhist** heritage.

7. Summarize findings of the research

The Namogam Stupa is located 45 kilometers west of the Sindhu River and 22 kilometers away from Baggah Town on the right bank of the Swat River in a vast and scenic valley region rich in natural beauty and historical significance, especially as part of the former Uddiyana Kingdom. The rule of King Suvisakka extended from Bactria, encompassing Balkh, all the way to Mathura in India, and royal tiles associated with him have been discovered in these areas.

It is said that the Great Buddha Sabbanjuta attained enlightenment beneath the Aparajita Bodhi Throne in Bodh Gaya, and his golden relic tiles were found there. Relics such as the Buddha's sacred tooth, hair, and other relics were also brought from the Nava Vihara in Balkh and enshrined in the Namogam Stupa.

The Namogam Stupa was rediscovered by British archaeologist **Aurel Stein** and Italian scholar **Tucci** in 1966. Excavation officially began in 1967–68. The site contains three large stupas aligned from north to south and 56 smaller stupas. A monastery is also located behind the main stupa.

In addition to legendary Buddha relics, Scytho-Parthian era tiles, pottery, and a large number of gemstones were discovered. Near the stupa, statues depicting various Buddhist Jataka tales were also found, which are now displayed in the Swat Museum.

The **Namo Ghan Stupa** stands as a testament to the cultural and religious prosperity of the **Swat Valley** during the time of **King Suviṣṭhaka**. Its association with the relics of **Nava Vihara** and the Buddha's sacred remains underscores its importance as a center of Buddhist veneration. The site's grand architecture and intricate carvings continue to inspire admiration and serve as a reminder of the **Swat Valley's** historical significance as a Buddhist stronghold.

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25. Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic), Kandy

1. Introduction

The **Sri Dalada Maligawa**, commonly known as the **Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic**, is located in **Kandy**, the cultural capital of **Sri Lanka**. This revered temple, which houses the **Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha**, was once part of the royal palace complex of the **Kingdom of Kandy**. The presence of the relic has made the temple a significant religious, cultural, and political site in **Sri Lanka's** history. It was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** due to its historical and spiritual importance.

The temple's origins are closely intertwined with Sri Lankan monarchy, as successive rulers safeguarded and enshrined the sacred relic to symbolize their sovereignty. This article draws primarily from **Anuradha Seneviratna's "Dalada Maligawa" (1989)** and **W.I. Siriweera's "History of Sri Lanka" (2004)**.

2. Details of the Relics

The **Sacred Tooth Relic** holds immense reverence as a physical remnant of the **Buddha**. According to historical records:

- After the **Buddha's Mahaparinirvana**, the Tooth Relic was taken to **Kalinga (modern Odisha, India)**.
- During political unrest, **King Guhasiva** of Kalinga entrusted the relic to **Prince Danta** and **Princess Hemamala**, who smuggled it to **Anuradhapura** hidden in the princess's hair【Brockman, 2011】.

The Tooth Relic became a symbol of royal authority, with the belief that whoever possessed it had the divine right to rule the island.

Key Relic Events:

Year/Period	**Event**
4th Century CE	The Sacred Tooth Relic was brought to **Sri Lanka** by **Prince Danta** and **Hemamala**.
Dambadeniya Era	The relic was housed at **Niyamgampaya Vihara**.
16th Century CE	During **Portuguese incursions**, the relic was hidden at **Delgamuwa Vihara**.
17th Century CE	**King Vimaladharmasuriya I** reinstalled the relic at **Kandy** and constructed a two-storey shrine.
18th Century CE	**King Vira Narendra Sinha** rebuilt the temple in its current form.

3. Cultural and Religious Significance

The **Sri Dalada Maligawa** is not merely a temple but a symbol of national identity:

- **Symbol of Sovereignty**: Possession of the relic was seen as a divine endorsement of kingship.
- **Rituals and Festivals**: The relic is central to the **Esala Perahera**, one of the grandest Buddhist processions in the world, featuring ornately decorated elephants, dancers, and drummers.
- **Pilgrimage Site**: Buddhist devotees from around the globe visit the temple to pay homage to the relic.

4. Architectural Features

The **Sri Dalada Maligawa** showcases a blend of **Kandyan architecture** and symbolic elements associated with Buddhist temple complexes.

Key Architectural Elements:

- **Main Shrine (Viharageya)**: Houses the **Sacred Tooth Relic**, encased in a series of nested reliquaries made of gold and adorned with precious stones.
- **Octagonal Pavilion (Paththirippuwa)**: Originally built as a royal audience hall, now used for public rituals.
- **Golden Canopy**: Installed in modern times to protect the roof of the shrine.
- **Moat and Drawbridge**: Adds both aesthetic value and a defensive structure, signifying its royal heritage.

The temple is surrounded by a moat and enclosed within a wall featuring carvings of **lotus flowers**, a symbol of purity in Buddhist iconography.

5. Comparative Analysis: Similar Temples with Relics

Temple Name	Location	Associated Relic	Historical Significance
Lingguang Temple	Beijing, China	Buddha's Tooth Relic	Believed to hold a tooth relic enshrined in a pagoda.
Shwedagon Pagoda	Yangon, Myanmar	Buddha's Hair Relics	Houses two hair relics of the Buddha.
Buddha Tooth Relic Temple	Singapore	Tooth Relic	Contains a relic encased in a golden stupa.

6. Summarize findings of the research

The Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) in Kandy was originally a royal palace where the sacred tooth relic of the Lord Buddha was enshrined. Since ancient times, the temple has played a significant role in regional politics and was given great reverence by the Sinhalese kings, who meticulously safeguarded it. Today, it stands as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After the Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha, Prince Guhasiva and Princess Hemmamali smuggled the sacred tooth relic hidden in a lock of hair as they fled to the island of Sri Lanka. They entrusted the relic to the royal palace in **Anuradhapura**. From that point onward, the protection of the sacred tooth relic became a royal duty and symbolized the legitimacy of the king's rule over the entire island. Hence, many rulers built temples for the relic near their palaces.

Throughout different eras, the sacred relic was housed at **Niyamgampaya Vihara** for veneration. During the reign of King Dharmapala, the relic was moved to **Delgamuwa Vihara** in Ratnapura and concealed within a stone container for safekeeping.

In the 17th century, **Hiripitiye Diyawadana Rala** and **Devanagala Rathnalankara Thera** brought the relic back to Kandy and entrusted it to King **Vimaladharmasuriya**, who built a two-story shrine for it. However, this building no longer exists.

In 1603, when the Portuguese invaded Kandy, the relic was moved to **Meda Mahanuwara** in Dumbara for protection. During the reign of **Rajasinha II**, the relic was rediscovered, and a new temple was either rebuilt or constructed anew to house it.

The present-day temple was constructed by **Vira Narendra Sinha**, with further additions made during the reign of **Sri Vikrama Rajasinha**. The royal architect **Devendra Moolacharya** designed significant features such as the octagonal pavilion (**Thirippuwa**) and the moat (**Paththirippuwa**) as symbolic tributes. Originally, the temple was used as a royal retreat, but later it became a sanctum for the sacred tooth relic and now serves as a revered cultural and historical museum.

The **Sri Dalada Maligawa** remains a symbol of Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage and spiritual identity. The history of the Sacred Tooth Relic illustrates how religious artifacts can transcend their spiritual significance to become potent symbols of sovereignty and cultural unity. The enduring reverence for the relic underscores the profound role that Buddhism plays in the nation's historical narrative.

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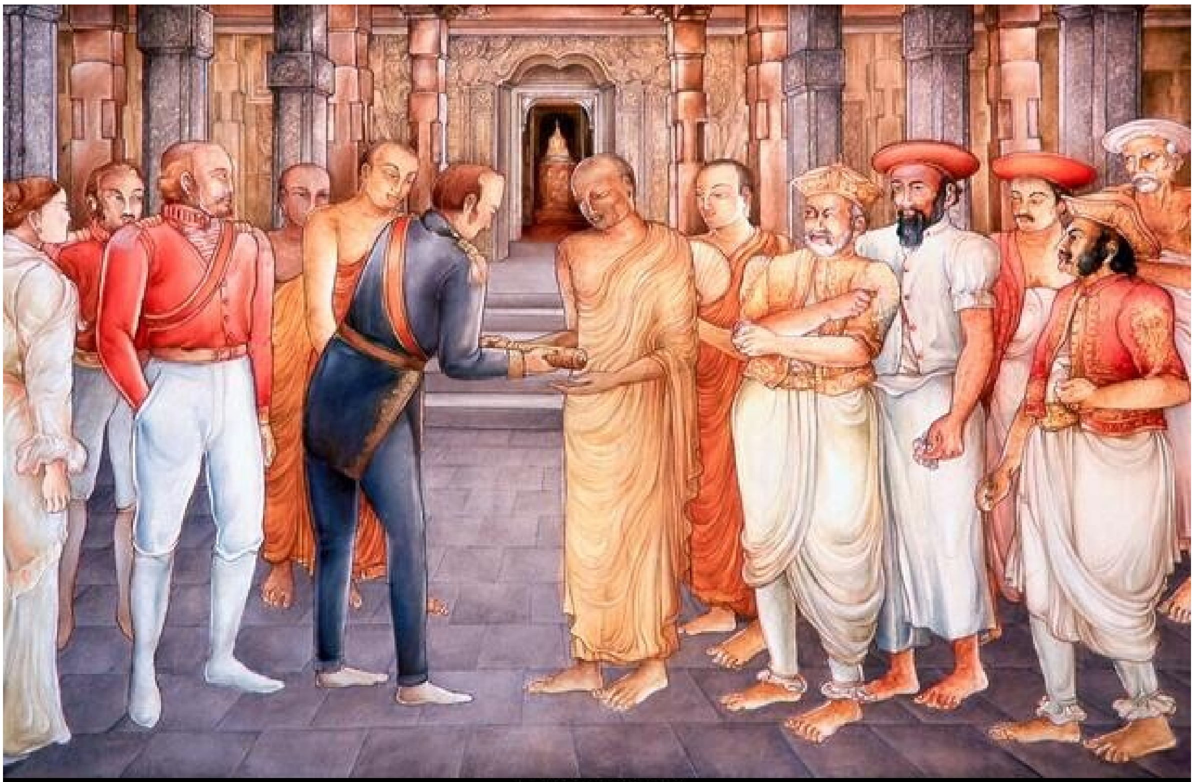

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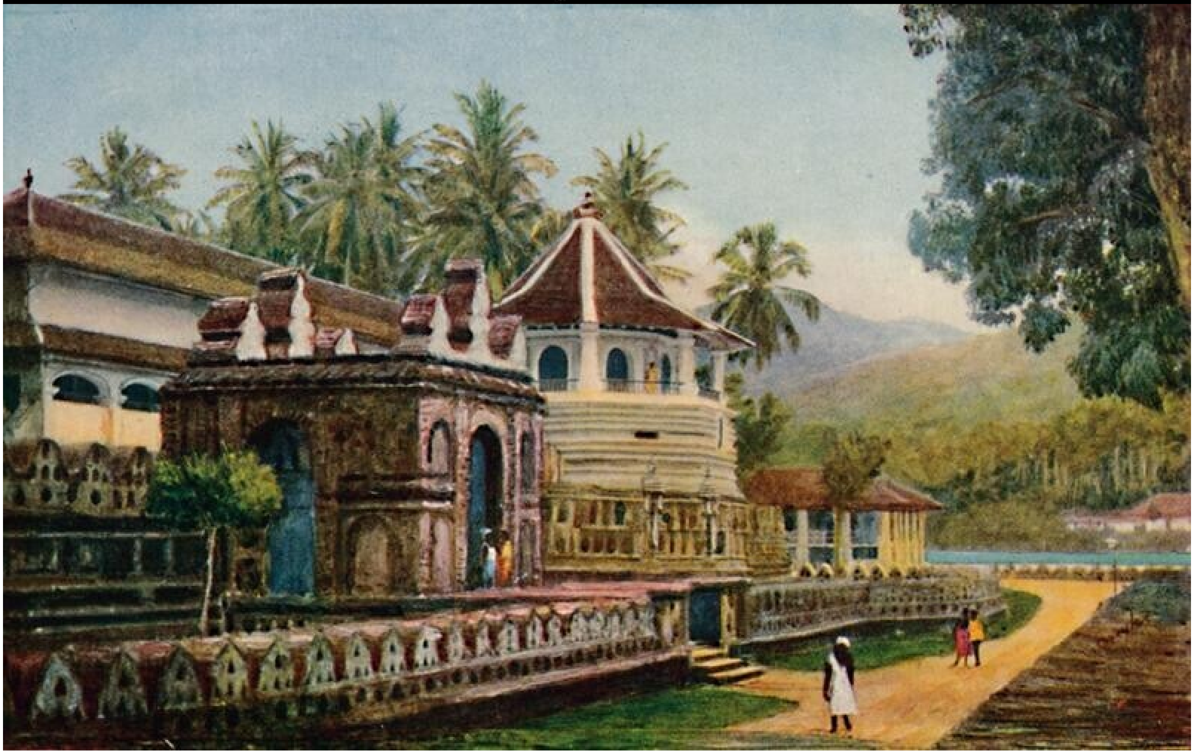


26. The Sanchi Stupa (Madhya Pradesh, India)

1 Historical Background

The Sanchi Stupa is one of the most significant monuments of early Buddhist architecture and stands as a testament to the religious, cultural, and artistic flourishing of Buddhism during the Mauryan and post-Mauryan periods. Built in the 3rd century BCE under the patronage of Emperor Ashoka, the Great Stupa at Sanchi was constructed to enshrine the relics of the Buddha and to serve as a pilgrimage site for devotees. Ashoka, following his conversion to Buddhism, aimed to establish stupas as sacred centers for spreading the Buddha's teachings, and Sanchi became one of the foremost sites for this purpose .

Located in Madhya Pradesh, Sanchi was strategically situated near trade routes, making it accessible to travelers and pilgrims from across the subcontinent. In addition to the main stupa (*Stupa 1*), the Sanchi complex includes smaller stupas, monastic structures, and prayer halls that reflect the evolution of Buddhist ritual spaces over time.

The stupa underwent significant renovations and expansions during the Satavahana dynasty (1st century BCE), which added elaborately carved gateways (*toranas*) and a stone railing that enclosed the stupa. These additions transformed Sanchi from a relatively simple structure into a grand religious monument adorned with intricate narrative reliefs depicting the Buddha's life and *Jataka* tales (stories of the Buddha's previous incarnations) .

2 Relic Descriptions

Although the Great Stupa is primarily associated with relics of early Buddhist teachers rather than the corporeal relics of the Buddha himself, it played a vital role as a symbolic reliquary. Small reliquary caskets discovered within the stupa and its surrounding structures suggest the presence of secondary relics (*paribhogika-dhātu*), such as relics associated with prominent monks who spread the Buddha's teachings .

These relics were often enclosed within stone containers and accompanied by votive offerings, including beads, amulets, and small sculptures of the *dharmachakra* (Wheel of Dharma). The relics served as focal points for rituals, prayers, and merit-making activities, reinforcing the spiritual significance of the site for Buddhist communities.

3 Archaeological Findings

The archaeological exploration of Sanchi began in the early 19th century, with detailed documentation and excavations conducted by British archaeologists such as Alexander Cunningham and later by Sir John Marshall. These excavations uncovered a wealth of artifacts, inscriptions, and sculptures that shed light on the history and religious practices associated with the site. Key findings include:

- **Gateways (*Toranas*)**: The four stone gateways surrounding the stupa, added during the Satavahana period, are masterpieces of narrative sculpture. They depict scenes from the Buddha's life, including his birth, enlightenment, and first sermon, as well as episodes from his previous lives as recounted in the *Jataka*tales .
- **Relic Caskets**: Stone and metal caskets containing votive relics and inscriptions indicating the names of donors. These caskets are often inscribed with Buddhist prayers and dedications from lay patrons, monks, and royal figures.

- **Monastic Structures**: In addition to the stupas, the Sanchi complex contains remnants of monasteries and prayer halls, highlighting its role as a monastic center for religious instruction and meditation .

4 Tabular Data: Relic Findings in the Sanchi Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Ashes	Believed to be associated with early Buddhist teachers.
Votive Caskets	Stone containers with inscriptions and symbolic offerings.
Beads and Amulets	Found as offerings, signifying devotion and acts of merit-making.
Sculptures	Narrative reliefs depicting the Buddha's teachings and life events.

5 Preservation Efforts

The Great Stupa at Sanchi was in a state of disrepair when it was first rediscovered by British officials in the 19th century. Over time, the site had suffered from natural decay, neglect, and local dismantling for building materials. Recognizing its historical and religious importance, efforts to preserve and restore the stupa began in the early 20th century, spearheaded by Sir John Marshall, Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India.

Marshall's restoration work involved reassembling the fallen stone components of the stupa and gateways, stabilizing the site, and reconstructing damaged sections based on original designs.

The site's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1989 has further enhanced preservation efforts, ensuring that the monument remains protected from environmental degradation and encroachment .

Current preservation strategies include:

- **Structural Reinforcement**: Stabilizing the stupa dome and gateways to prevent further deterioration.
- **Documentation and Digital Preservation**: Creating detailed digital records and 3D scans of the site for future research and restoration.
- **Community Engagement**: Involving local communities in conservation efforts and promoting awareness of the site's cultural significance.

6 Comparative Analysis

The Sanchi Stupa stands out for its elaborate narrative reliefs and grand architectural features, particularly its *toranas*. In contrast to the Dharmarajika Stupa, which is relatively austere in design and focused primarily on relic enshrinement, Sanchi's artistic program emphasizes storytelling and visual pedagogy.

The depiction of the Buddha's life in symbolic and narrative forms reflects the transition from aniconic representations (such as the *Bodhi tree* and *empty throne*) to more direct depictions of key events. However, unlike the Bimaran Stupa in Gandhāra, Sanchi does not feature early anthropomorphic depictions of the Buddha, highlighting regional differences in artistic expression .

The comparative richness of Sanchi's reliefs also reflects the patronage of a diverse group of donors, including merchants, monks, and royal figures, who contributed to its embellishment. This collaborative effort underscores the communal nature of Buddhist worship and the role of stupas as centers for collective merit-making.

27. The Amaravati Stupa (Andhra Pradesh, India)

1 Historical Background

The Amaravati Stupa, located in present-day Andhra Pradesh, India, is one of the most significant Buddhist monuments in the Deccan region. Constructed between the 2nd century BCE and the 3rd century CE, it became a prominent center for Mahayana Buddhism during the Satavahana dynasty. Historical records suggest that Amaravati was both a pilgrimage site and an important hub for Buddhist learning, attracting monks and devotees from across the subcontinent .

The Amaravati Stupa was initially built as a modest mound to enshrine sacred relics, but subsequent expansions transformed it into a grand monument with intricate sculptural embellishments and narrative reliefs. By the time of its peak, the stupa became renowned for its artistic innovations and served as a prototype for later stupas in Southeast Asia. The stupa's location near the Krishna River facilitated trade and cultural exchange, contributing to its growth as a cosmopolitan religious center .

Epigraphic evidence from the site reveals royal patronage by the Satavahana kings, as well as donations from merchants, guilds, and lay devotees. This collaborative patronage underscores the role of the stupa as a communal space for religious practice and public assembly .

2 Relic Descriptions

Unlike the stupas of Sanchi and Dharmarajika, which primarily housed corporeal relics, the Amaravati Stupa is associated with contact relics (*paribhogika-dhātu*) linked to the Buddha's life, such as representations of his robe, alms bowl, and symbolic footprints (*buddhapada*). The presence of votive relics—offered by devotees as acts of merit—further emphasizes the stupa's role as a sacred space for communal veneration.

Sculptural panels at Amaravati frequently depict symbolic representations of the Buddha's teachings, such as the *dharmachakra* (Wheel of Dharma) and the *Bodhi Tree*, reinforcing the stupa's role as a reliquary of faith rather than a physical repository of corporeal relics .

3 Archaeological Findings

The archaeological exploration of the Amaravati Stupa began during the colonial period, with significant excavations carried out by Sir Walter Elliot in the 1840s. Subsequent excavations unearthed an extensive array of sculptural fragments, inscriptions, and relic caskets, providing valuable insights into the site's religious and artistic legacy .

Key findings include:

- **Sculptural Panels**: The limestone panels depict scenes from the Buddha's life, including his enlightenment, first sermon, and parinirvana. These panels are notable for their intricate carvings and narrative detail.
- **Relic Caskets**: Several small caskets were found containing votive offerings and symbolic representations of the Buddha's relics.
- **Inscribed Pillars**: Many stone pillars bear inscriptions detailing the names of donors and their dedications, illustrating the social composition of Amaravati's patron community .

However, the site suffered significant losses due to the removal of artifacts during the colonial era. Many of the sculptural fragments and relics were transported to the British Museum, where they became part of the "Amaravati Marbles" collection .

4 Tabular Data: Relic Findings in the Amaravati Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Symbolic Relics	Representations of the Buddha's robe, alms bowl, and footprints.
Votive Offerings	Beads, miniature stupas, and flowers as devotional acts.
Sculptures	Narrative reliefs illustrating key events in the Buddha's life.
Inscriptions	Dedications from merchants, monks, and royal patrons.

5 Preservation Efforts

The Amaravati Stupa faced considerable damage due to neglect, looting, and the removal of its sculptures during the colonial period. By the time systematic conservation efforts began in the early 20th century, much of the original structure had been dismantled, and many sculptural fragments were scattered across museums in India and Europe.

Current preservation initiatives include:

- **Reconstruction Efforts**: Partial reconstruction of the site using surviving architectural elements.
- **Digital Archives**: 3D scans and digital reconstructions of the stupa's sculptural panels for academic research and public display.
- **Repatriation Dialogues**: Efforts to negotiate the return of Amaravati artifacts held in foreign museums, particularly the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum .

The Indian government and international heritage organizations have also worked to increase public awareness of Amaravati's cultural significance and to promote sustainable tourism at the site.

6 Comparative Analysis

The Amaravati Stupa is often compared to the Sanchi Stupa for its narrative reliefs and artistic complexity, but it surpasses Sanchi in its detailed portrayal of Mahayana iconography. While Sanchi primarily relies on symbolic depictions of the Buddha, such as the *Bodhi Tree* and *empty throne*, Amaravati incorporates early depictions of Bodhisattvas and celestial beings, reflecting the rise of Mahayana Buddhism .

In contrast to the Dharmarajika Stupa, which emphasizes relic enshrinement, Amaravati's focus on narrative storytelling and artistic embellishment highlights its function as a pedagogical space for illustrating the Buddha's teachings. The stupa's proximity to trade routes also fostered cross-cultural influences, as seen in the Hellenistic and Persian motifs present in some of its sculptural details .

The dispersal of Amaravati's relics and sculptures to multiple institutions has raised ethical questions regarding cultural heritage and the preservation of sacred Buddhist sites. These debates mirror similar controversies surrounding the relocation of relics from Gandhāran stupas excavated by Charles Masson .

28. The Ramagrama Stupa (Nepal)

1 Historical Background

The Ramagrama Stupa, located in Nawalparasi, Nepal, is a unique and highly revered relic stupa due to its historical and spiritual significance. It is believed to be the only stupa that has remained unopened and undisturbed since its creation. According to Buddhist tradition, the stupa was constructed to house a portion of the Buddha’s cremated remains that were entrusted to the Koliyas, one of the eight clans who received the Buddha’s relics after his *parinirvana* (final passing) .

The *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* recounts that after the Buddha's passing, his relics were divided and distributed among eight major kingdoms in ancient India. The Koliyas, a clan based near the Buddha’s maternal home in Devadaha, received their share and built the Ramagrama Stupa to enshrine these sacred remains .

According to legend, the serpent deities (*nagas*) guard the stupa, ensuring its protection from desecration. This mythological association has elevated the status of the Ramagrama Stupa as an untainted and eternally sacred site. The stupa’s intact state also symbolizes the spiritual purity and resilience of the Buddha's teachings .

Unlike other relic stupas that have undergone multiple phases of expansion, restoration, and archaeological exploration, Ramagrama remains unexcavated as a mark of respect for its religious sanctity. This unbroken reverence contributes to its global recognition as a sacred Buddhist site.

2 Relic Descriptions

The relics enshrined within the Ramagrama Stupa are believed to include:

- **Corporeal Relics (*saririka-dhātu*)**: Fragments of the Buddha's cremated bones and ashes.
- **Symbolic Relics**: Offerings such as flowers, precious stones, and ritual objects placed as devotional acts alongside the relics.

Because the stupa has not been opened, detailed descriptions of its relic contents are drawn from historical texts rather than archaeological findings. Buddhist traditions emphasize that the undisturbed relics radiate blessings and spiritual merit, making the Ramagrama Stupa an unparalleled site for pilgrimage .

3 Archaeological Findings

As the Ramagrama Stupa has remained unopened, no direct archaeological excavations have been conducted at the site. However, surface surveys and surrounding excavations have provided insights into its historical context:

- **Architectural Design**: The stupa is a simple yet imposing hemispherical mound constructed from brick and earth, with a circumambulatory path for ritual practice.
- **Surrounding Monuments**: Small votive stupas and markers around the primary stupa suggest that the site served as a ritual complex for pilgrims .
- **Hydrological Features**: The site is located near the Gandaki River, which holds spiritual significance and is believed to have been used for purification rituals by pilgrims.

The absence of excavation has allowed the Ramagrama Stupa to retain its original structure, unlike stupas such as Amaravati or Sanchi, which have been partially reconstructed due to historical damage .

4 Tabular Data: Relic Findings in the Ramagrama Stupa

Type of Relic	Description
Bones	Believed to be fragments of the Buddha's cremated remains.
Symbolic Relics	Offerings such as flowers, gemstones, and incense.
Ritual Items	Potential votive objects placed as acts of devotion.

5 Preservation Efforts

The Ramagrama Stupa's status as a sacred and undisturbed relic stupa has led to efforts to preserve its integrity both as a historical monument and as a living site of Buddhist pilgrimage. Preservation efforts have included:

- **Protective Measures**: Fencing and controlled access to prevent unauthorized entry and damage.
- **Documentation**: Detailed surveys and digital mapping to document the stupa's dimensions and surrounding features.
- **Heritage Advocacy**: Nepalese cultural organizations, in partnership with UNESCO, have worked to raise awareness about the site's significance and its designation as part of the potential World Heritage circuit connected to Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace .

However, debates persist regarding whether the site should remain untouched or whether limited, non-invasive research should be conducted to better understand its history and contents. Some scholars argue for greater preservation through enhanced structural maintenance, while others emphasize the importance of maintaining the site's sanctity and unbroken tradition .

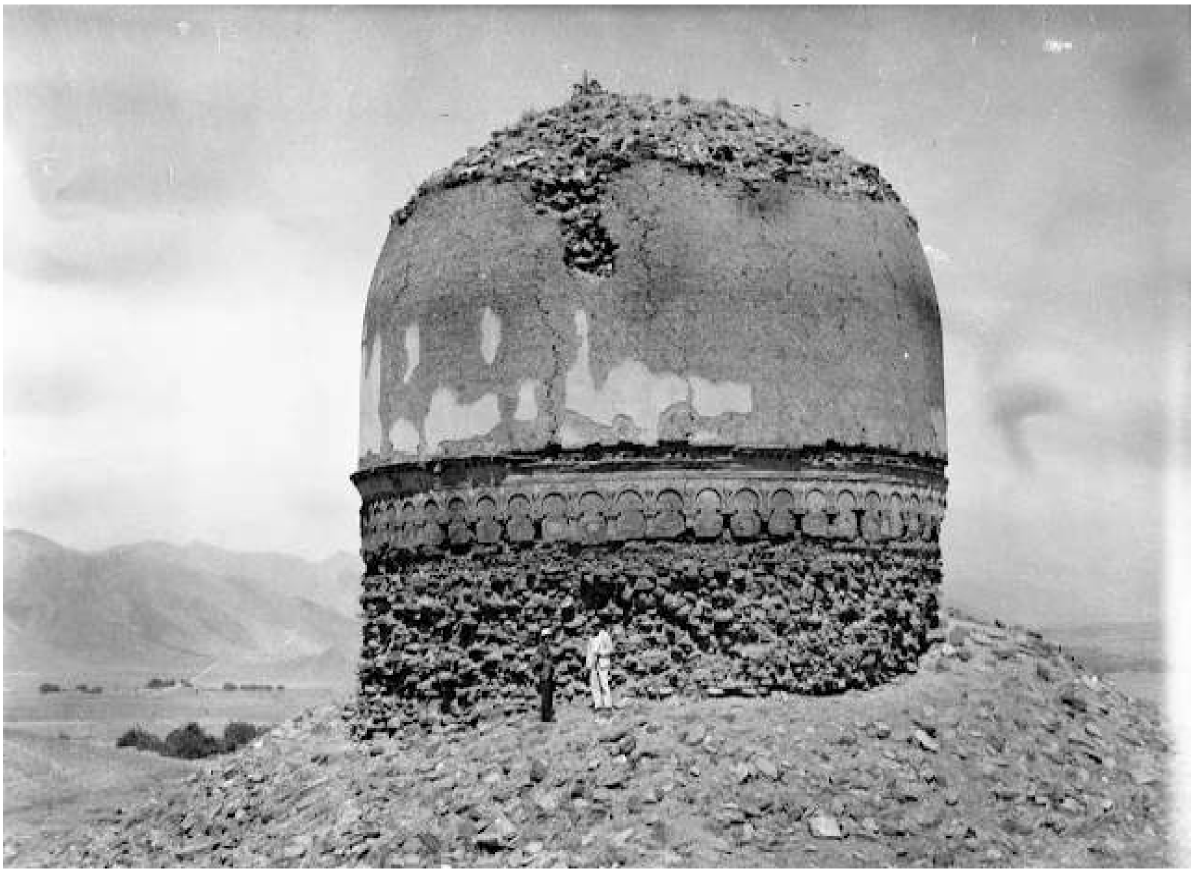
6 Comparative Analysis

The Ramagrama Stupa is unique among Buddhist stupas for its unaltered and undisturbed state. In contrast to stupas such as Dharmarajika and Bimaran, which were excavated and subjected to archaeological exploration, Ramagrama embodies the ideal of an untouched relic shrine. This status has made it an essential symbol of spiritual purity in the Buddhist world.

In comparison to Ruwanwelisaya in Sri Lanka, which underwent multiple phases of restoration to reinforce its national religious significance, Ramagrama has remained a humble yet sacred site, unembellished by later architectural additions. This simplicity reinforces its spiritual narrative as a place of eternal guardianship by the *nagas* and as a beacon of the Buddha’s original relic veneration practices .

The stupa’s location near the Gandaki River also draws parallels to the water features at Anuradhapura, where ponds and tanks symbolized purification and rebirth. However, Ramagrama’s connection to the river is more closely tied to its geographical context as a pilgrimage destination on the route to Lumbini, underscoring its role in the broader sacred geography of Buddhist Nepal .

29. The Kamari Stupa near Kabul (The Broken Front Tooth Relic)



This study explores the significance of the hidden *Broken Front Tooth Relic* of the Buddha, potentially denoted as **Fig. 59.8**, discovered within the Kamari Stupa near Kabul. The relic, concealed within a small chamber at the core of the stupa and surrounded by symbolic offerings, reflects the profound reverence and protective measures associated with relic enshrinement in Buddhist traditions.

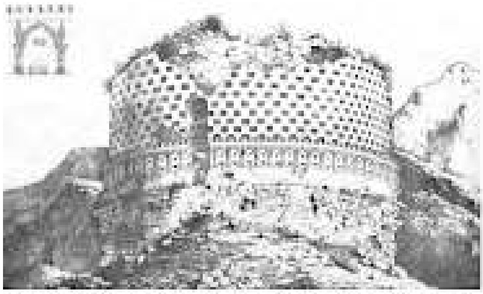


Figure 57 Jacquet 1836, pl. 3: The 'north' side of Kamari 2 (sketch after Masson). Fussman (2008, pl. 25a) states the view is from the north-west

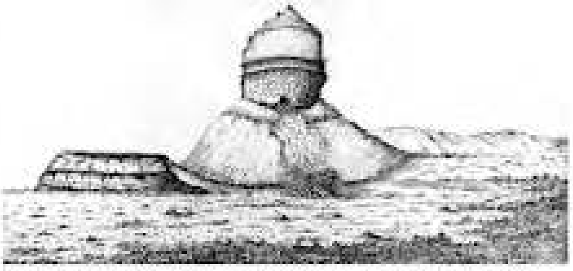
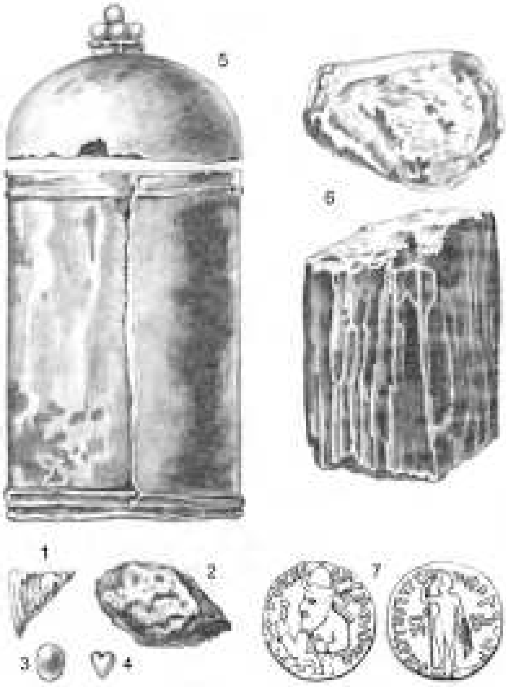


Figure 58 F64 f. 80: 'Tope Kamari near Kabul' from the east showing the remains of the surrounding courtyard; for sketch see F64 f. 81, Vol. II, Fig. 29. British Library

mountain, being similar but of smaller dimension, and less perfect in construction' (**Figs 57–8**).

The stupa is located in the centre of a quadrangle. It measures c. 16m high and c. 11.5m in diameter (Fussman 2008, p. 49). Honigberger excavated part of the south side of the courtyard and found a solidly constructed row of small vaulted rooms (Jacquet 1836, pp. 262–3). These were subsequently identified by Godard as cells, 2.7m square, covered by brick domes on squinches (unpublished manuscript, cf. Fussman 2008, p. 45, n. 5). The Wima Kadphises coin found in the relic deposit, dates the foundation of the original stupa to c. early 2nd century AD; the later structure and extant monastery have been dated c. 4th–5th century (Fussman 2008, p.53), with pottery finds suggesting the site remained in cult until c. 9th century (Ball and Gardin 1982, p. 145, no. 519). The blind arcade of ogee arches and Indo-Corinthian pilasters on the stupa drum is the same as those of Shevaki 1, 3, 7 and 10B, with cone-like buds in the spandrels. There are two dowel holes for a statue in each arch (Fussman 2008, p. 113, pl. 25a).

Figure 59 Kamari 2 relic deposit (after Jacquet 1836, pp. 265–70, pl. XIII.1; 1838, pl. XIII.1)



Honigberger dug a horizontal tunnel from the north into the base of the stupa dome. He found an earlier stupa c. 5m high, with a dome c. 2.1m in diameter, encased within the subsequently enlarged structure (Jacquet 1836, p. 265, Fussman 2008, p. 50). In the centre of the core stupa was a cell c. 30.5cm square, made of six rectangular cut stones. This contained:

Finds

A very fine, dark red cloth which crumbled to dust, covering a round, shallow, bronze basin (diam. 20.3cm), extremely oxidized with its base almost entirely rusted away (not illustrated). This contained a mixture of fine pulverized earth (probably mixed with ash):

Fig. 59.1: Tree bark.

Fig. 59.2: Fragments of a white resinous material.

Fig. 59.3: A 'purplish-blue hemispherical gem' (probably amethyst, like the beads in Bimaran stupa 2).

Fig. 59.4: A heart-shaped turquoise.

Fig. 59.5: A cylindrical beaten silver reliquary with a domed lid containing

Fig. 59.6: A striated and rough petrification ('The Philosopher's Stone').

Fig. 59.7: A gold coin of Wima Kadphises (c. AD 113–27).

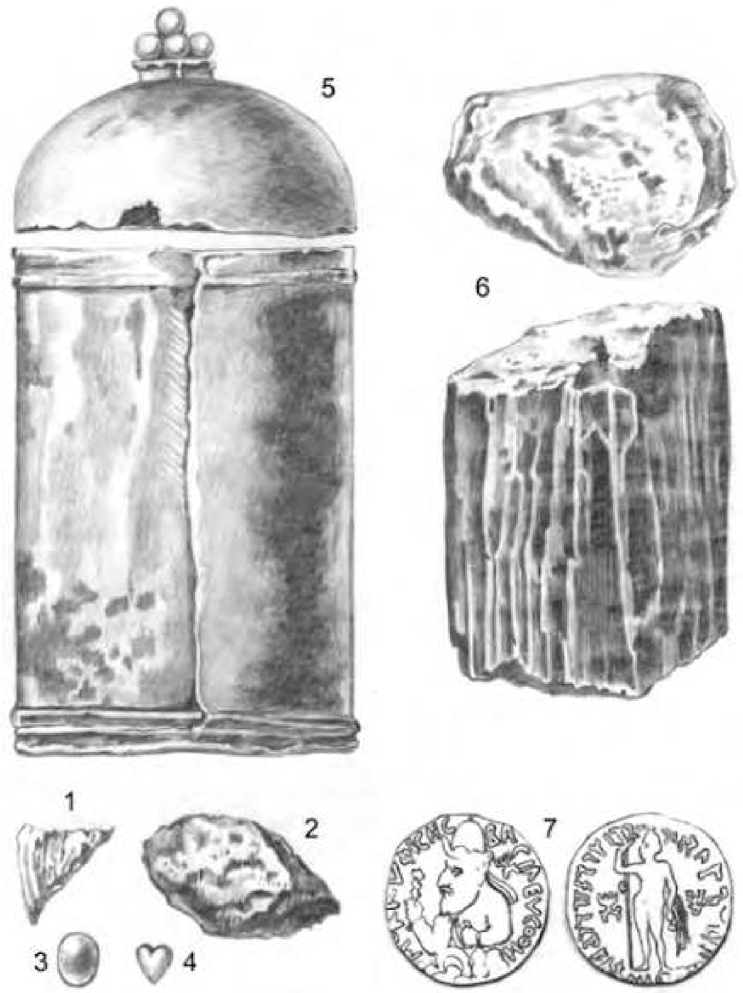
Seh Topan ('Three Stupas')

Fussman (2008, pp. 54–62, 300, pls 36–45) records at least four or possibly six stupas, of which no. 1 and no. 4 are identified as the two best preserved and illustrated here. Foucher shows a view from above stupas 1 and 4, with mounds 2 and 3 in between, which he misidentifies as 'Les trois top de Kamari' (1942, p. 172, pl. XXX.e; and f: 'Un des trois top de Kamari'; see also Fussman 2008, pl. 36.b); Ball and Gardin 1982, p. 239, no. 1016, map 110: Seh Tūpān, lat. 34°27'N, long. 69°18'E, locate the site 1.5km east of Kamari 2 (**Figs 60–1**).

Seh Top 4

BM-OP 21-8-35, No. 5: 'Two miles [3.22km] distant from [Kamari stupa 2]; named Cetope in consequence of there

Drawing on historical, cultural, and spiritual contexts, the paper examines the reasons behind the concealment, including protection from desecration, symbolic reverence, and the embodiment of key Buddhist doctrines such as *anicca* (impermanence). The relic’s association with the **Kushan Empire**, evidenced by a Wima Kadphises gold coin, further highlights the role of relic worship in legitimizing political authority and promoting Buddhist patronage. This analysis reveals that the hidden tooth relic serves as both a spiritual beacon and a historical testament to the enduring legacy of the Buddha’s teachings, preserved through layers of ritual, devotion, and artistic craftsmanship.



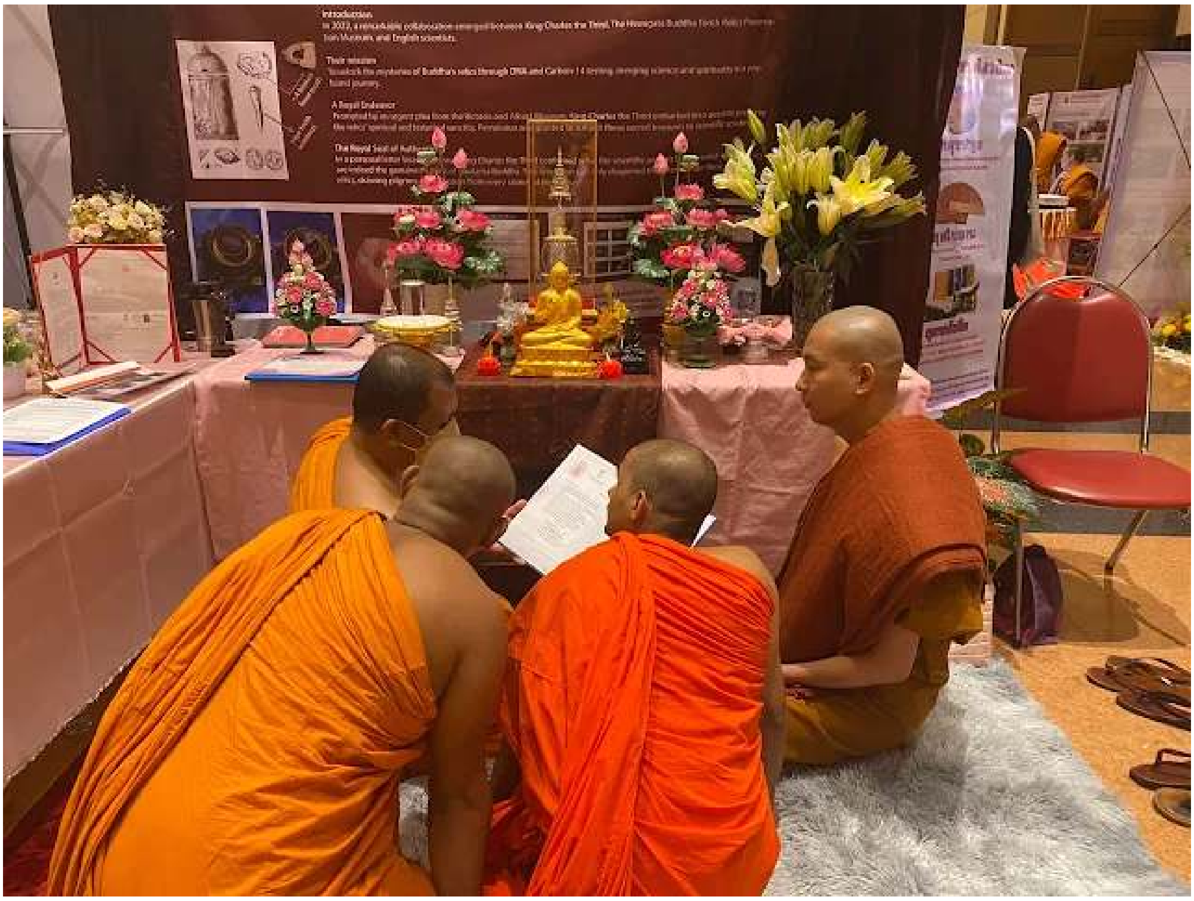
Discovery and Context

The relic featured in the British Museum's collection is an extraordinary discovery originating from an ancient stupa at **Kamari** near Kabul. Excavations carried out in the early 19th century by scholars such as **Jacquet** and **Honigberger** uncovered a variety of sacred and historical deposits sealed within the relic chamber at the base of the stupa dome. This chamber was carefully crafted with six rectangular cut stones, forming a square space approximately **30.5 cm** in size.

Among the most significant findings was a **cylindrical beaten silver reliquary** with a domed lid (Figure 5). Inside this intricately designed container lay a **small fragment of a broken front tooth** believed to belong to a revered individual—most likely associated with the Buddha's relics or an eminent Buddhist figure.

The Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum 's preservation of the broken front tooth relic and accompanying artifacts allows modern scholars and practitioners to engage with this invaluable piece of Buddhist heritage. For followers of the Buddha's teachings, the relic serves as a tangible symbol of **impermanence** (anicca) and **spiritual continuity**, echoing the profound journey of the Dhamma across centuries.

Whether displayed for scholarly inquiry or devotional reverence, the broken tooth relic remains a poignant reminder of the enduring legacy of Buddhism and its message of enlightenment.



Historic Display of Authentic Buddha Tooth Relics at MCU's 136th Anniversary

Wang Noi District, Ayutthaya Province - September 13, 2023

In a momentous celebration of the 136th Anniversary of Mahachulalongkornrajavidalaya University (MCU), history was made as the institution welcomed visitors from around the world to witness the unprecedented display of Buddha's authentic tooth relics. The event, held at the MCU Mahavajiralongkorn Conference Hall in the Wang Noi District of Ayutthaya Province, showcased these sacred relics, signifying a profound intersection of science and spirituality.

A Journey of Cooperation and Reverence

The journey leading up to this historic event was marked by international cooperation and goodwill. The former Rector of MCU visited Myanmar and initiated discussions with the Secretary of the Hswagata, resulting in the Buddha tooth relics.

In February 2023, The Hswagata Museum sent the information confirming the DNA and Carbon-14 to MCU, further solidifying the authenticity of the relics. In August of the same year, the founder of The Hswagata, who is pursuing a Ph.D. program in peace studies at the International Buddhist Studies College of MCU, extended an official letter to the Rector's Office, outlining plans for an International Worship Program.

Following a productive meeting between the Vice-Rector of the Foreign Affairs Department and the founder of The Hswagata, the decision was made to include The Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum in the exhibition.

Author -

Bhikkhu Indasoma (Researcher)

30. Dysentery (Blood Diarrhea) and the Buddha’s Sacred Blood Relics

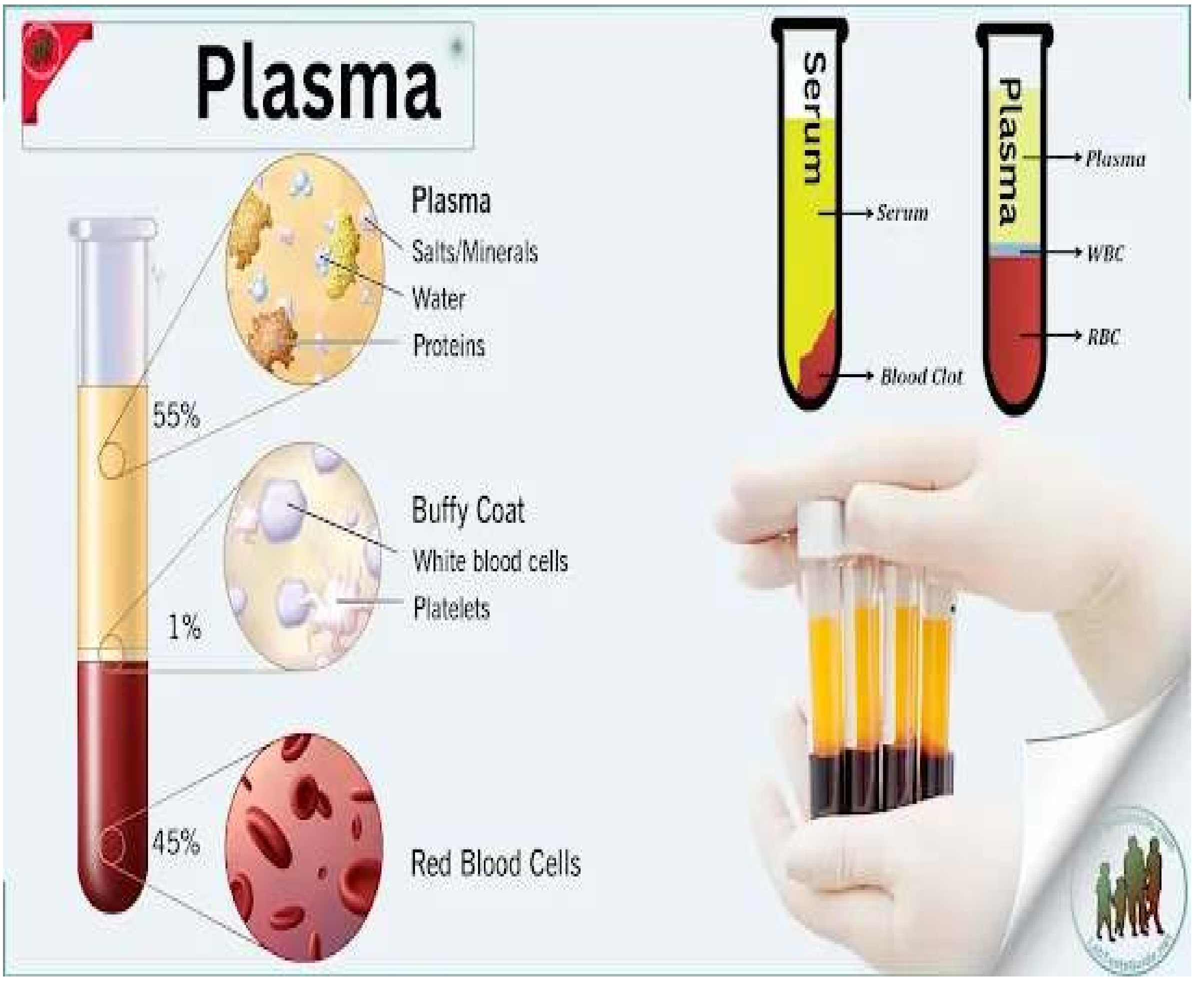
The Final Day of the Buddha: A Reflection on Parinibbāna

HD
ZEE TV
Chomsapit

On the final day of the Buddha, his journey came to a poignant conclusion marked by both physical suffering and profound teachings. At the age of 80, the Buddha was traveling to Kusināra (present-day Kushinagar, India) when he accepted a meal offered by a blacksmith named Cunda. This meal, referred to as **sukaramaddava**, has been the subject of much debate, with interpretations ranging from soft pork to truffle-like mushrooms. Regardless of its nature, the meal led to severe abdominal pain and dysentery, symptoms that would soon mark the end of his earthly existence.

The Illness

Shortly after consuming the meal, the Buddha experienced intense discomfort, characterized by abdominal cramps and dysentery. Despite the physical distress, he maintained his composure and mindfulness, embodying the teachings he had shared throughout his life. Scholars suggest that his condition may have been exacerbated by the natural decline of aging and the toll of his extensive travels.


Plasma
Plasma
Salts/Minerals
Water
Proteins
55%
Buffy Coat
White blood cells
Platelets
1%
45%
Red Blood Cells
Serum
Serum
Blood Clot
Plasma
Plasma
WBC
RBC

The Cause of the Buddha's Death (Parinibbāna)

1. **Historical Context of the Meal**:
   According to the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (Dīgha Nikāya 16), during the Buddha's final journey, he accepted a meal offered by a blacksmith named **Cunda (or Chunda)**. After consuming this meal, the Buddha experienced severe abdominal pain and dysentery but remained calm and mindful.
2. **Sukaramaddava (Controversial Food)**:
   - Some traditions interpret it as **soft pork or pig-related meat**.
   - Others interpret it as a type of **truffle, mushroom, or root**.
   - Regardless of what the food was, the Buddha developed symptoms shortly after consuming it.
3. **Medical Diagnosis (According to Tradition)**:
   - **Gastroenteritis**: Most scholars believe the Buddha suffered from dysentery (severe infection of the intestines).
   - Some scholars suggest the illness was from old age and the strain of traveling at the age of 80.

Final Instructions Before Death

Despite his illness, the Buddha continued his journey and reached **Kusināra (present-day Kushinagar, India)**. There, he gave his final teachings, emphasizing:

Appamāda (heedfulness)

: "All conditioned things are impermanent. Strive diligently to attain liberation (Nibbāna)."

The Buddha then entered the four absorptions (*jhana*) and passed into **Parinibbāna (final release)** at the age of **80**.

"Dysentery" (Blood Diarrhea) is a medical condition that primarily affects the **intestines, stomach, and digestive tract**, causing symptoms such as **abdominal cramps, diarrhea with mucus or blood, vomiting, and dehydration**. This condition can be serious if left untreated, especially if accompanied by a significant loss of body fluids.

Causes of Dysentery (Blood Diarrhea)

1. **Contaminated Food or Water**
    - Consumption of unclean or spoiled food and water.
    - Presence of harmful bacteria (*Shigella*), viruses, or parasites in food.
2. **Intestinal Infections by Pathogens**
    - *Shigella* bacteria, which is a common cause of dysentery.
    - *Entamoeba histolytica*, a parasite that causes **amoebic dysentery**.
3. **Lack of Hygiene**

    Poor hygiene and sanitation can lead to the spread of infections that cause dysentery.

Symptoms of Dysentery

- Diarrhea mixed with blood and mucus.
- Severe stomach cramps and fever.
- Fatigue and weakness due to fluid loss.
- Nausea and vomiting.

The Journey to Kusināra

Even in the face of illness, the Buddha continued his journey, demonstrating his commitment to his path and teachings. Upon reaching Kusināra, he lay down between two trees, a serene setting that would become the backdrop for his final moments. His disciples gathered around him, filled with concern and sorrow, yet the Buddha remained calm, offering them solace and wisdom.

Final Teachings

In his last moments, the Buddha delivered profound teachings, emphasizing the principle of **Appamāda** (heedfulness). He reminded his followers that “All conditioned things are impermanent. Strive diligently to attain liberation (Nibbāna).” This message encapsulated the essence of his teachings, urging his disciples to remain mindful and dedicated to their spiritual practice.

As he prepared to enter **Parinibbāna** (final release), the Buddha entered the four absorptions (jhana), a state of deep meditative concentration. With a tranquil mind, he passed away, leaving behind a legacy that would inspire countless generations.

The Significance of His Passing

The Buddha's death was not viewed as a tragedy within the Buddhist tradition. Instead, it was seen as the ultimate liberation from the cycle of birth and death (Saṃsāra). His passing served as a reminder of the impermanence of life and the importance of striving for enlightenment.

Dysentery, also known as blood diarrhea, is a serious medical condition that primarily affects the intestines, stomach, and digestive tract. It is characterized by symptoms such as abdominal cramps, diarrhea mixed with mucus or blood, vomiting, and dehydration. If left untreated, dysentery can result in severe complications due to significant fluid and blood loss. Historical accounts indicate that even the Lord Buddha suffered from dysentery during his final days, a poignant reminder of the frailty of the human body.

The Buddha's Battle with Dysentery

In the Buddha's final days, it is recorded that he endured a severe case of dysentery, resulting in significant blood loss. His resilience in the face of immense physical suffering stands as a testament to his profound mindfulness and strength. The Buddha's condition worsened, leading to a critical point where his attending physician prepared seven bottles filled with *gutha* (a Pali term often referring to bodily waste in the medical context).

The Mystery of the Seven Bottles

Despite being intended to contain a medicinal sample, each bottle was filled entirely with the Buddha's blood instead of the expected contents. These seven bottles, symbolic of the Buddha's mortal suffering, were preserved with reverence by his followers. After the Buddha's passing, the physician entrusted the blood-filled bottles to a sacred stupa (reliquary monument) as bodily relics of the Buddha's compassionate journey.

King Ajātasattu and the Dhatunidhana

Upon receiving reports about the stupa containing these sacred blood relics, King Ajātasattu of Magadha became intrigued. He ordered the stupa to be opened—a procedure known in Pali as *Dhatunidhana*, meaning "opening of the relic chamber." The king took possession of the sacred blood bottles, further amplifying their reverence as symbols of the Buddha's sacrifice.

The Journey of the Blood Relics to King Kanishka's Empire

Centuries later, during the reign of King Kanishka, the renowned Kushan emperor who expanded his empire to Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna), the relics once again came into prominence. During his conquest, King Kanishka discovered two of the Buddha's blood plasma bottles within a stupa. Deeply moved by this profound discovery, the king transported the relics back to his kingdom. In their honor, he commissioned the construction of a grand stupa, aptly named *The Blood Relics Stupa*, to preserve these sacred remnants.

During the Buddha's era, the renowned physician Sivaga performed brain surgery using advanced medical tools and techniques, suggesting a high **standard of medicine that enabled effective blood plasma management.**

Charles Masson and others discovered that Buddha's tooth relics, including blood plasma, were remarkably well-preserved due to ancient techniques. Relics were treated with chemical and herbal liquids, which, upon opening, vaporized (like alcohol). This advanced preservation method accounts for the excellent condition of the 2500-year-old tooth, hair, blood plasma, and nails.

Preservation of the Buddha's Blood Relics in Modern Times

The Blood Relics Stupa became a site of pilgrimage and devotion for centuries. However, with time, the relics were rediscovered during archaeological excavations. It is believed that some of the blood relics were transported to the British Museum, where they are preserved as invaluable historical and spiritual artifacts. The Buddha's blood relics stand as an enduring symbol of his physical trials and unwavering spiritual resolve.

Conclusion

The final day of the Buddha was a profound culmination of his teachings and life experiences. His ability to remain mindful and composed in the face of suffering exemplified the core principles of Buddhism. As he transitioned into Parinibbāna, the Buddha left a lasting impact on his followers, encouraging them to pursue their spiritual paths with diligence and awareness. His legacy continues to resonate, reminding us of the importance of mindfulness, compassion, and the pursuit of liberation.The narrative of the Buddha's dysentery and the preservation of his blood relics transcends mere historical documentation. It reflects the profound veneration of his disciples and later generations for the mortal struggles endured by the Enlightened One. The relics, enshrined and revered across empires and generations, serve as a reminder of the Buddha's immense compassion, resilience, and teachings that continue to inspire millions around the world.

Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka)
Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer
Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

31. The Last Words of the Buddha

The last words of Gautama Buddha, often regarded as the final teachings of the Enlightened One, hold immense significance in the Buddhist tradition. These words, spoken in the Pali Canon, emphasize the impermanence of all conditioned things and the importance of mindfulness and diligent practice. This article explores the context, meaning, and implications of the Buddha’s last words, supported by scriptural references and historical interpretations.

The Last Words of the Buddha: Context and Source

The Buddha's last words are recorded in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16) of the Dīgha Nikāya. This sutta documents the final days of the Buddha’s life, chronicling his journey to Kushinagar, where he attained Parinibbāna (final passing away).

In the final moments of his life, the Buddha addressed the monks who had gathered around him. His last recorded words in the Pali language were:

“Vayadhammā saṃkhārā appamādena sampādetha.”

This is often translated as:

“All conditioned things are subject to decay. Strive on with diligence.” (Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, DN 16)

Key Terms Explained:

1. **Vayadhammā:** Subject to decay or impermanence.
2. **Saṃkhārā:** Conditioned phenomena, everything that arises due to causes and conditions.
3. **Appamādena:** With diligence, mindfulness, or heedfulness.
4. **Sampādetha:** Strive or accomplish.

Interpretation of the Last Words

1. Impermanence ("Anicca")

The Buddha reiterates the core teaching of anicca (impermanence), which is one of the Three Marks of Existence (tilakkhaṇa). By stating that all conditioned things are subject to decay, the Buddha reminds his disciples that clinging to the impermanent leads to suffering (dukkha).

2. Diligence in Practice

The word appamāda has been translated as heedfulness or diligence. In the Buddhist context, it signifies constant mindfulness and unwavering effort in pursuing the Eightfold Path (Ariya Aṁṅgika Magga). The Buddha's emphasis on diligence serves as a reminder that liberation (nibbāna) is achievable through consistent effort.

Historical Significance of the Buddha's Last Words

The Buddha's last words symbolize the culmination of his teachings. The following aspects highlight their historical and doctrinal importance:

1. A Reminder of Self-reliance

The Buddha's last instructions underscore the necessity for individual responsibility. He often emphasized that liberation must be attained through one's own effort. This aligns with his statement in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta:

"Be your own refuge, with no other refuge." (DN 16)

2. A Final Lesson on Non-attachment

The Buddha's message teaches that attachment to anything—be it possessions, relationships, or even teachings—leads to suffering. By encouraging his disciples to let go and focus on their practice, he imparted a final lesson on non-attachment.

3. Inspiration for Generations of Practitioners

The phrase appamādena sampādetha has inspired monastics and lay practitioners alike. The renowned monk Venerable Buddhaghosa, in his commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya, elaborates that diligence (appamāda) is the foundation for all virtues (pāramī) and the antidote to heedlessness (pamāda).

Commentaries and Perspectives

1. Buddhaghosa's Interpretation

In the Sumangalavilāsinī (commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya), Buddhaghosa explains that the Buddha's last words emphasize the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṁṭhāna): mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. He suggests that heedfulness is the precursor to enlightenment.

2. Modern Buddhist Scholars

Contemporary scholars like Bhikkhu Bodhi and Ajahn Brahm have reflected on the Buddha's final teachings as a call to live with full awareness. Bhikkhu Bodhi emphasizes that appamāda encompasses not only mindfulness but also ethical conduct and wisdom.

Application in Daily Practice

The Buddha's last words are not merely historical; they serve as a practical guide for modern practitioners. Here are ways these teachings can be applied:

1. Mindful Living

Practicing mindfulness in daily activities, whether walking, eating, or working, aligns with the spirit of appamāda. By staying present, one cultivates awareness and reduces mental distractions.

2. Effort in Meditation

The emphasis on diligence encourages regular meditation practice. Whether practicing vipassanā (insight meditation) or samatha (calm abiding), consistent effort leads to deeper realization.

3. Reflection on Impermanence

Contemplating the transient nature of life can help reduce attachment and foster equanimity. This reflection is particularly valuable in times of loss or hardship.

Parallels in Other Traditions

The Buddha’s last words resonate with other spiritual traditions:

- **Christianity:** The biblical teaching "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20) echoes the Buddha’s encouragement to focus on spiritual cultivation.
- **Stoicism:** The Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius often wrote about the impermanence of life and the importance of living virtuously, similar to the Buddha’s call for heedfulness.

Conclusion

The last words of the Buddha, "All conditioned things are subject to decay. Strive on with diligence," encapsulate the essence of his teachings. They remind practitioners that impermanence is inevitable and that liberation is possible through mindful and diligent practice. By embracing this message, individuals can navigate life’s challenges with wisdom, compassion, and serenity.

References:

1. Dīgha Nikāya (DN 16), Mahāparinibbāna Sutta
2. Buddhaghosa, Sumangalavilāsinī (Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya)
3. Bhikkhu Bodhi, "The Buddha’s Teachings on Mindfulness and Liberation"
4. Ajahn Brahm, "Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond"
5. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "The Last Days of the Buddha: Reflections on Parinibbāna"

This study underscores that the Buddha's final exhortation to practice heedfulness remains as relevant today as it was over 2,500 years ago.

32. The relics' supernatural properties requiring scientific investigation.

Since childhood, I've possessed relics of the Venerable Ashin Sivali. A dream led me to a Shan State monastery where, guided by the surprised abbot, I discovered relics behind a standing Buddha statue, including those of Ashin Sivali.

I cleaned the relics, receiving permission to take one and some of the cleaning water(there is no more relics contain). Years later, I found **seven more relics in the box and many more in the water, a phenomenon** I attribute to the relics' supernatural properties requiring scientific investigation.

The Venerable Ashin Sivali was a renowned arahant during the time of the Buddha Gotama, revered for his exceptional merit in attracting material blessings and prosperity. He was one of the most eminent disciples and was acknowledged as foremost (etadagga) among those who received gifts and offerings. Sivali's father was Prince Mahali, and his mother was Suppavasa, a princess of the Koliya kingdom.

When Princess Suppavasa was pregnant with Sivali, her labor was unusually prolonged, lasting seven years and seven days. Despite this, she did not give birth, and her suffering grew increasingly intense. Out of devotion, she wished to pay homage to the Buddha and sought blessings. Her husband appealed to the Buddha, who, upon hearing of the situation, assured them, "Suppavasa is well, free from illness and suffering, and she will give birth to a healthy son." As soon as these words were uttered, Suppavasa gave birth to a beautiful baby boy effortlessly. Filled with gratitude, they named the child Sivali, meaning "One Who Brings Blessings."

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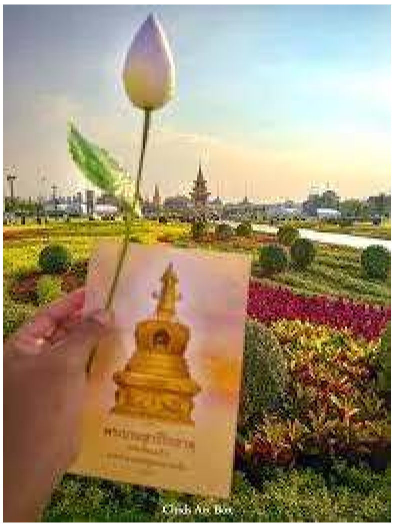
33. The Truth Behind the Sacred Tooth Relics from China



The journey of the Tooth Relics from China traces back to the early periods of Buddhism’s spread across Asia. When the sacred teachings of the Buddha reached the majestic kingdoms of China, emperors, monks, and devotees alike sought to honor these teachings with the utmost veneration. Among the highest expressions of this devotion was the preservation of the Buddha’s Tooth Relics, believed to embody the essence of the Buddha himself.

It is said that the relics, after the Buddha’s parinirvana, were divided and distributed among different regions. China, as a center of cultural exchange and religious reverence, became a recipient of some of these relics. The sacred Tooth Relics were enshrined in grand stupas and temple complexes, serving as focal points for meditation and pilgrimage.

The Emperor's Guardianship

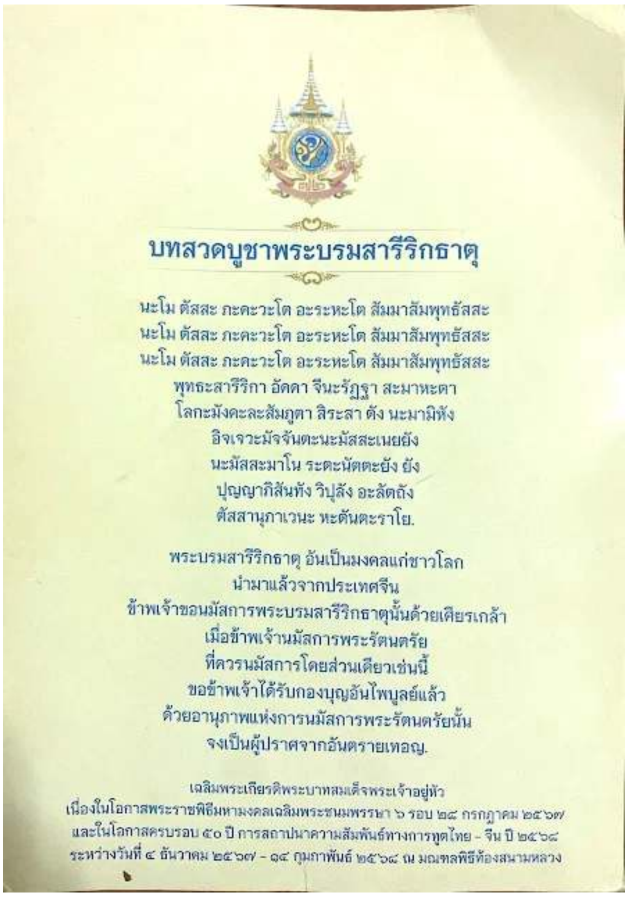
During the Tang and Song dynasties, the Tooth Relics were guarded with utmost care. Chinese emperors, who saw themselves as protectors of the Dharma, commissioned elaborate ceremonies to honor the relics. The relics were often displayed during times of national crisis to inspire hope and unity among the people.

One of the most famous accounts of the Tooth Relics' veneration comes from the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang. During a time of famine and unrest, the emperor ordered the Tooth Relics to be paraded through the capital. The relics, accompanied by monks chanting sutras and offerings of flowers and incense, were believed to have brought a miraculous change in fortune, as rains soon blessed the parched lands. A Chinese Venerable Monk transported the Buddha's Tooth Relic to China in a unique and remarkable manner. He underwent a surgical operation on his arm and placed the Tooth Relic inside, concealing it during the journey from India to China. This implies that the original size of the Tooth Relic may not have been as large as the one currently displayed to the public.

พระบรมสารีริกธาตุ
(พระเขี้ยวแก้ว)
จากสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน

As China emerged as a prominent hub on the Silk Road, the Tooth Relics became symbols of cultural and spiritual diplomacy. Delegates from neighboring kingdoms, including Sri Lanka, Tibet, and Southeast Asia, made pilgrimages to China to pay homage to the sacred relics. The presence of the Tooth Relics in China strengthened the bonds between Buddhist nations, fostering a shared sense of reverence and interconnectedness.

The relics also inspired the construction of magnificent stupas, such as the Great Wild Goose Pagoda in Xi'an and the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, where pilgrims gathered to witness the relics and receive blessings. Monks who visited these sites often carried the stories of the relics' miraculous powers back to their homelands, further spreading the influence of Chinese Buddhism.



บทสวดบูชาพระบรมสารีริกธาตุ

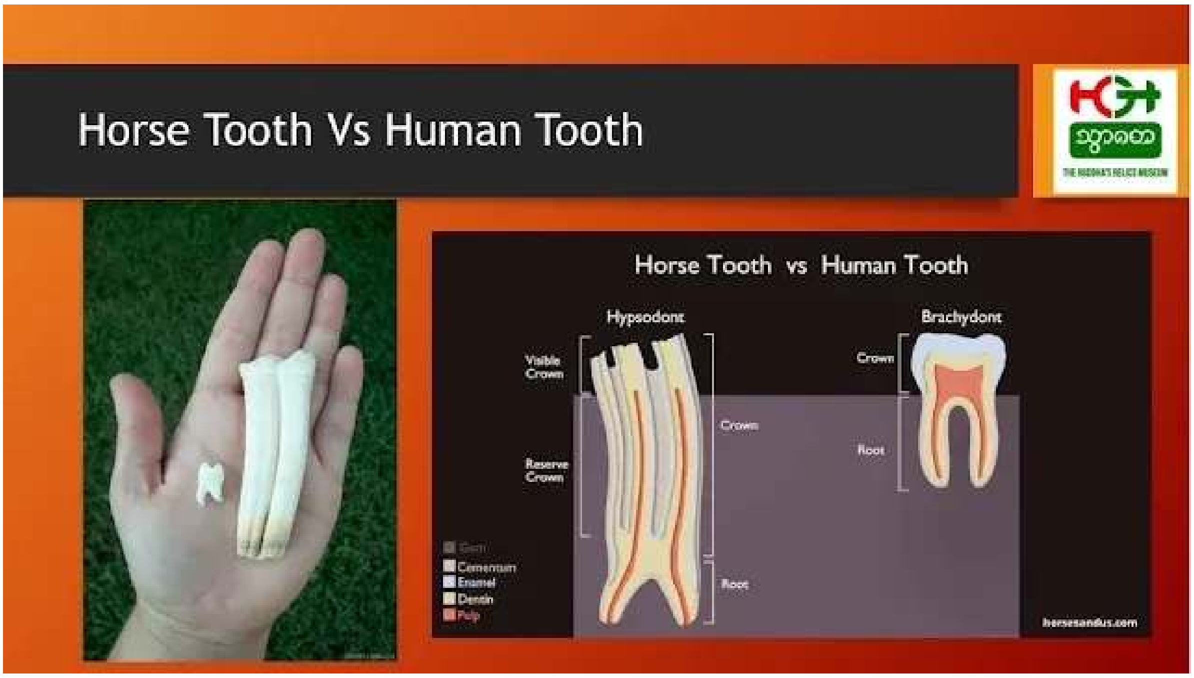
นะโม ตัสสะ ภะคะวะโต อะระหะโต สัมมาสัมพุทธัสสะ
นะโม ตัสสะ ภะคะวะโต อะระหะโต สัมมาสัมพุทธัสสะ
นะโม ตัสสะ ภะคะวะโต อะระหะโต สัมมาสัมพุทธัสสะ
พุทธะสารีริกา อัตตา จีนะรัฏฐา สะมาหะตา
โลกะมังคะละสัมภูตา สิระสา ตัง นะมามิหัง
อิจเจวะมัจจันตะนะมัสสะเนยยัง
นะมัสสะมาโน ระตะนัตตะยัง ยัง
ปุญญาภิสันทัง วิปุลัง อะลัตถัง
ตัสสานุภาเวนะ หะตันตะราโย.

พระบรมสารีริกธาตุ อันเป็นมงคลแก่ชาวโลก
นำมาแล้วจากประเทศจีน
ข้าพเจ้าขอนมัสการพระบรมสารีริกธาตุนั้นด้วยเศียรเกล้า
เมื่อข้าพเจ้านมัสการพระรัตนตรัย
ที่ควรนมัสการโดยส่วนเดียวเช่นนี้
ขอข้าพเจ้าได้รับกองบุญอันไพบูลย์แล้ว
ด้วยอานุภาพแห่งการนมัสการพระรัตนตรัยนั้น
จงเป็นผู้ปราศจากอันตรายเทอญ.

เฉลิมพระเกียรติพระบาทสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัว
เนื่องในโอกาสพระราชพิธีมหามงคลเฉลิมพระชนมพรรษา ๖ รอบ ๒๘ กรกฎาคม ๒๕๖๗
และในโอกาสครบรอบ ๕๐ ปี การสถาปนาความสัมพันธ์ทางการทูตไทย - จีน ปี ๒๕๖๘
ระหว่างวันที่ ๔ ธันวาคม ๒๕๖๗ - ๑๔ กุมภาพันธ์ ๒๕๖๘ ณ มณฑลพิธีท้องสนามหลวง

The sacred Tooth Relics were enshrined in grand stupas and temple complexes, serving as focal points for meditation and pilgrimage.

However, questions have often arisen regarding the Tooth Relics' size and structure. Observers have noted that some relics displayed are significantly larger and anatomically distinct from a human tooth. In contrast to the average size of a human tooth, which typically aligns with standard anatomical proportions, these relics sometimes appear almost monumental in scale, leading to speculation about their origins and symbolic representation.



Horse Tooth Vs Human Tooth

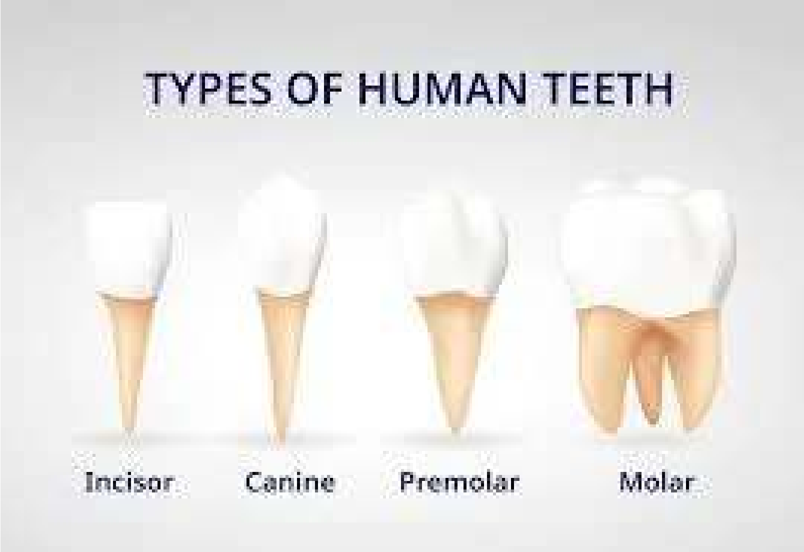
Horse Tooth vs Human Tooth
Hypsodont
Brachydont
Visible Crown
Reserve Crown
Crown
Root
Crown
Root
Gum
Cementum
Enamel
Dentin
Pulp
horsesandus.com

Looking back 2,500 years to the Buddha's era, the human anatomy was not significantly different from today. Yet, the Tooth Relics found in China, some larger than what could reasonably belong to a human being, present an intriguing mystery. Scholars and devotees interpret this disparity in different ways.

Some believe that the larger size reflects a symbolic representation of the Buddha's spiritual magnitude—an embodiment of his immense wisdom, compassion, and power rather than a literal depiction. Others suggest that the relics may have been augmented over time with protective casings or embellishments that increased their dimensions.

Additionally, some legends recount that the Buddha's physical body was extraordinary, imbued with marks of a great being (Mahāpurisa), which may have extended to the size and form of his physical remnants. This belief reinforces the reverence shown towards the Tooth Relics despite their anatomical differences.

Based on my research and understanding, the tooth relics currently on display in China do not match the anatomical structure of an actual human tooth. This has led to questions about the authenticity of the displayed relics.



According to historical accounts, when the original canine tooth relic was unearthed at an archaeological site, the workers accidentally broke it into four pieces. These fragments were subsequently preserved by different venerable Buddhist figures:

1. **The Supreme Patriarch of Thailand (Sangharaja)** is believed to have safeguarded one part of the relic.
2. **A revered Burmese monk** is said to have preserved another part of the canine tooth relic.
3. **Another piece** is reportedly under the care of a Sangharaja from another prominent Buddhist country.
4. The remaining part is claimed to be housed in China.

Due to this division, there is a belief that the Chinese relic display might not feature the full original tooth but instead contains the fragmented real relic embedded within an outer, reconstructed or symbolic tooth structure for display purposes.

This narrative underscores the possibility that what is seen on display is an ornate casing or a symbolic representation of the sacred relic, with the actual fragment hidden inside. Hence, the doubts surrounding the tooth relic's authenticity in China may arise from a misunderstanding of the preservation methods rather than deliberate deception.

Further research is needed to confirm this data.

Researcher

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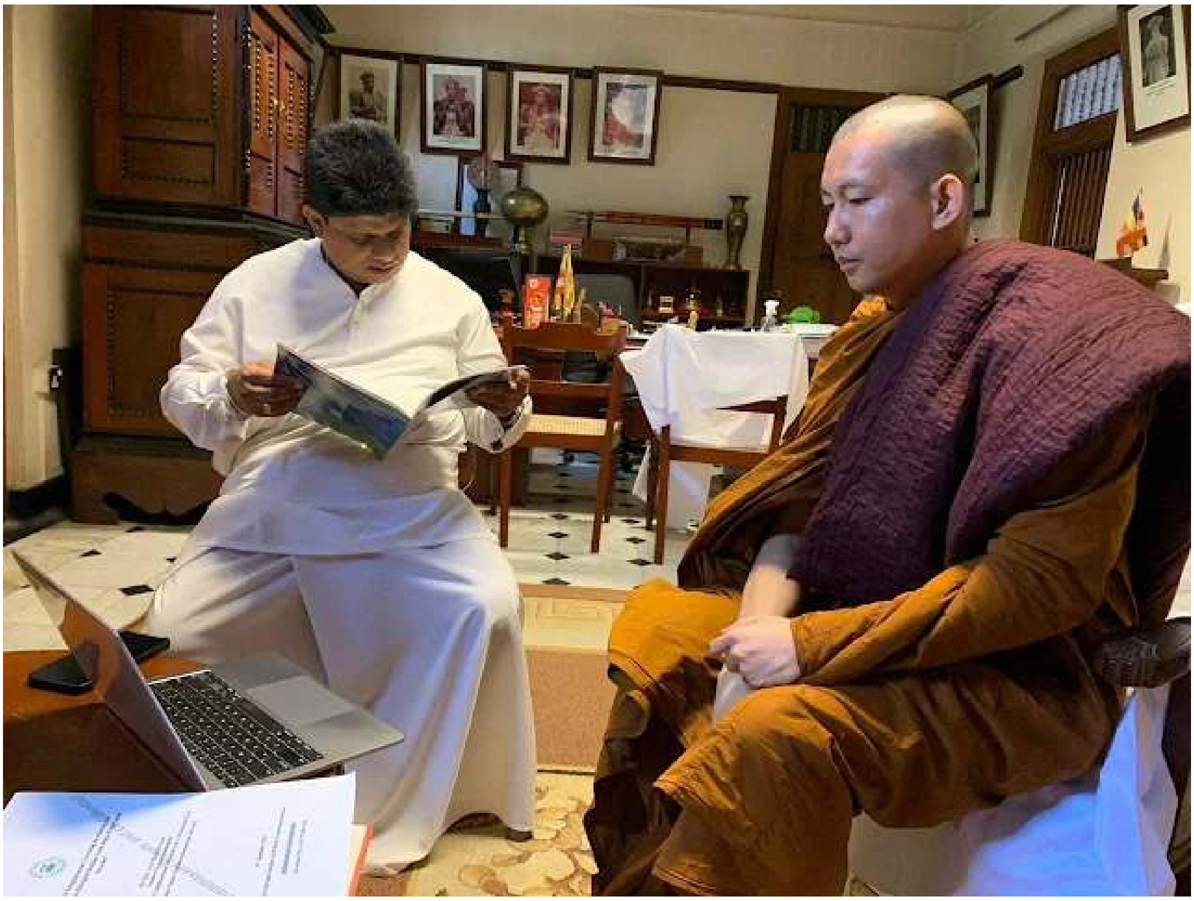
34. "Challenging Truths: The Global Implications of the Kandy Tooth Relics Debate"

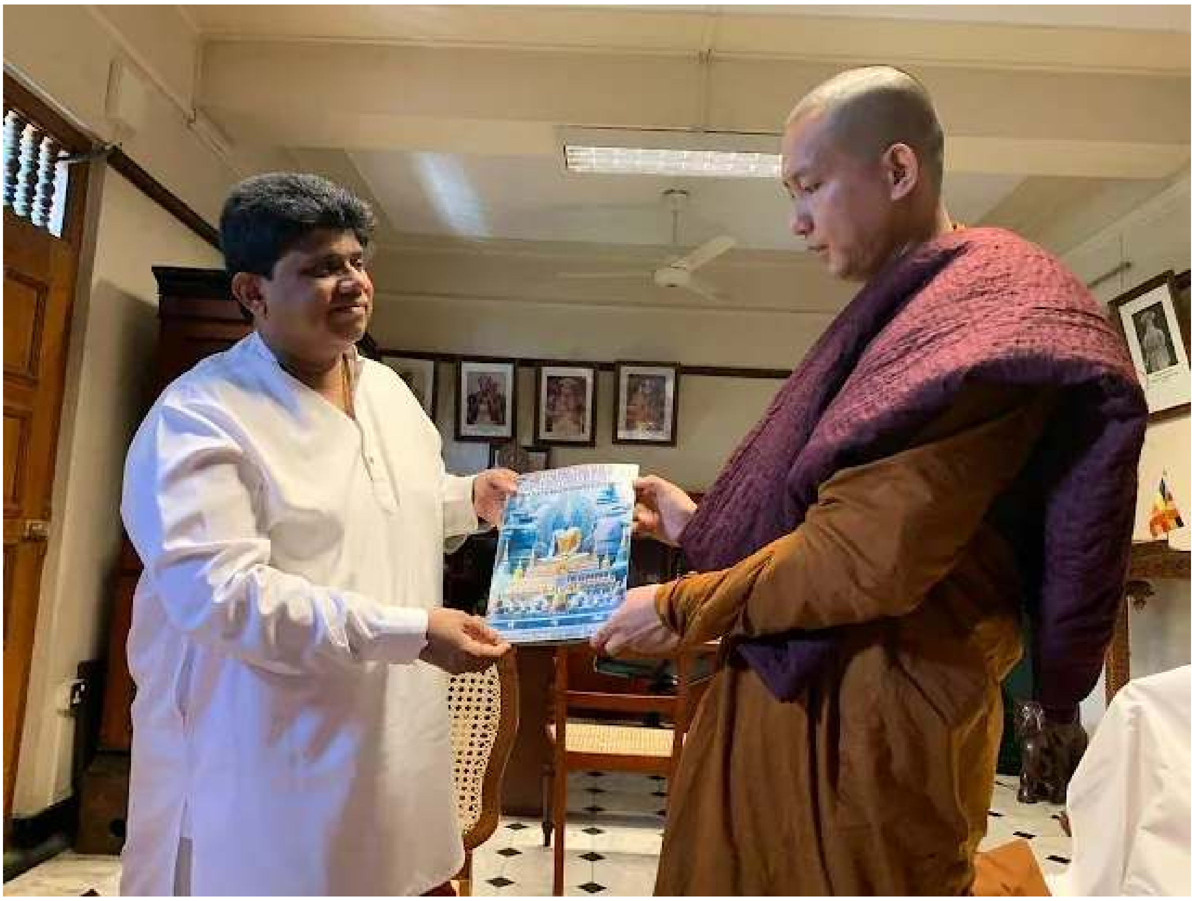
During the International Sangha Forum held in Gaya, Bihar State, India, the founder of Hswagata had the opportunity to meet a monk from Myanmar who is a member of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee. The monk presented his research findings on the Buddha Tooth Relics and their preservation. As part of the exchange, the founder gifted him the Annual Magazine of Hswagata.

During their discussions, the monk, as a member of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, offered valuable advice to Sao Dhammasami regarding his ongoing efforts in preserving Buddhist relics. Additionally, another member of the delegation suggested that Sao Dhammasami visit Sri Lanka to meet with the Chief Custodian of the Sacred Tooth Relic Temple in Kandy.

Following this recommendation, Sao Dhammasami traveled to Kandy, Sri Lanka, furthering his mission to enhance the preservation of sacred relics and strengthen cultural and spiritual ties between countries.



In a harmonious convergence of cultural custodianship, the founder of the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum engaged in a significant meeting with Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela, the esteemed Chief Custodian of The Temple Of The Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy, Sri Lanka. This rendezvous, marked by mutual respect and shared reverence for heritage, promised a promising alliance between two bastions of cultural preservation.



During the rendezvous, the founder of the Hswagata Museum presented Dr. Pradeep with a Certificate of Honorary Senior Advisor and Lifetime Membership, acknowledging his profound contributions to the safeguarding of the revered Buddha Tooth Relics. This gesture, a testament to Dr. Pradeep's expertise and dedication, symbolized a bond forged in the fires of cultural stewardship.

During the visit to the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy, Sri Lanka, the founder of the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Sao Dhammasami, had the privilege of meeting Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela, the Chief Custodian, on two occasions.

During the first meeting, Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela inquired if Sao Dhammasami could show him the Buddha Tooth Relics. In response, Sao Dhammasami presented photographs of the sacred relics, providing a visual glimpse into their significance.

Subsequently, Sao Dhammasami expressed his wish to view the revered Buddha Tooth Relics housed at the temple. However, Dr. Pradeep politely declined the request, citing the sacred and restricted nature of the relics, which are not customarily shown to visitors.

When the founder, Sao Dhammasami, inquired about the size of the Buddha Tooth Relics preserved at the temple, Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela responded with a physical gesture. Using his right hand, he measured the length with his little finger, or "pinkie." Based on this gesture, it is believed that the relics in Dr. Pradeep's care are approximately 2.5 inches in size length .

Dr. Pradeep then remarked that the Tooth Relics presented by Sao Dhammasami were similar in size to those of a human being, and he noted that they appeared smaller compared to the relics preserved at the temple.

The first meeting took place in the morning, where initial discussions were held in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration. Following this, Dr. Pradeep graciously hosted a lunch in honor of Sao Dhammasami, fostering a deeper connection between the two cultural custodians.

After the lunch concluded, a second meeting was held in the temple’s meeting hall. This time, Dr. Pradeep invited a distinguished archaeology professor from the university to join the discussion. The professor's participation added valuable insights, further enriching the dialogue and strengthening the shared commitment to the preservation of sacred relics and cultural heritage.

During the second meeting, the professor engaged in a discussion with Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela regarding the research presented by the founder of HGT. She remarked that if the findings confirmed the authenticity of the Buddha Tooth Relics, it would pose a significant challenge—not only for Kandy but also for Sri Lanka and the global Buddhist community. Her observations underscored the potential global implications of such a discovery.

As the meeting progressed, the professor requested access to the research paper, letters of evidence, and lab result data presented by Sao Dhammasami. In response, he shared the private and confidential research paper with her. She reviewed the material and made photocopies of selected data for further analysis, ensuring the discussion was rooted in a thorough examination of the evidence.

Several years ago ,during a visit to Kandy, Sri Lanka, a very senior monk from Myanmar, holding a highly respected rank, made a special request to the Mahanayaka Thero of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. On this occasion, the Mahanayaka Thero agreed to show the revered relics to the esteemed visiting monk.

When the relics were revealed, it was observed and confirmed that the Tooth Relic appeared to be the size of a human tooth, aligning with what would be expected from human proportions. This moment marked a significant confirmation regarding the physical characteristics of the relic, contrasting previous accounts of its size.

However, a discrepancy arose when comparing the size of the relic as described by Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela and the relic shown by the Mahanayaka Thero to the senior Myanmar monk. Dr. Pradeep had previously indicated, through a physical gesture, that the relic was approximately 2.5 inches, much larger than a typical human tooth. Yet, the relic shown to the esteemed monk appeared to match the size of a human tooth.

This inconsistency has raised questions about the sacred or symbolic nature of the Kandy Tooth Relics, prompting deeper reflection and inquiry into their authenticity and significance. The divergence in reported measurements underscores the complexity and mystique surrounding these revered objects, leaving the true nature of the relics open to interpretation.

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35. The Sacred Tooth Relic of Singapore and Symbol of Faith Beyond Perception

The Sacred Buddha Tooth Relic: A Symbol of Faith Beyond Perception In the 1990s, a significant event unfolded that continues to inspire believers and spiritual seekers. A revered Buddhist **monk from Sagaing** Division in Myanmar entrusted a sacred Buddha Tooth Relic to a **respected Most Venerable monk in Singapore**.

This noble act symbolized a profound gesture of spiritual connection, reverence, and trust between two nations devoted to the path of the Buddha. However, the size of the relic stirred debates among some observers, leading to doubts about its authenticity. Nonetheless, a deeper understanding reveals that such sacred objects transcend the limitations of ordinary perception.

To appreciate the relic's true value, one must go beyond the confines of scientific reasoning and embrace the vast spiritual energy that such relics emanate. According to ancient Buddhist traditions, relics often hold remarkable properties that cannot be explained through material analysis alone. There is a belief that within the relic, smaller fragments of Buddha's remains or relics from enlightened disciples may be enshrined, further amplifying the relic's spiritual potency.

Daily worship and devotion to the Buddha, including practices such as chanting and meditative offerings, create a powerful connection to the Buddha's energy. This practice forms an unbreakable spiritual bond between the devotee and the teachings of the Enlightened One. Just as the universe responds to vibrations of compassion, mindfulness, and peace, these daily acts of faith draw unseen forces that foster profound inner transformation.

A simple analogy illustrates this concept: when ice is placed inside a steel cup, droplets of water form on the outer surface due to the temperature shift. Similarly, the Buddha relic can be seen as a source of inner coolness and serenity that radiates outward, influencing the external environment with purity and blessings. This analogy reminds us that unseen energy can manifest in subtle yet tangible ways, reinforcing the sacredness of the relic. Furthermore, it is essential to approach these sacred objects with humility and respect rather than skepticism.

Faith and devotion can open our hearts to experiences that science may not yet explain.

The relic's size or form may challenge conventional understanding, but its purpose and significance remain grounded in the Buddha’s teachings of liberation, compassion, and wisdom. Relics like the Buddha Tooth serve as powerful symbols that inspire faith, encourage mindfulness, and remind practitioners of the Buddha’s enduring presence. Regular worship of the relic, performed with sincerity and reverence, becomes a means of fostering spiritual growth and collective well-being.

The blessings that emanate from such devotion transcend individual comprehension, becoming a beacon of hope, peace, and harmony. The Buddha Tooth Relic from Myanmar, now housed in Singapore, should be seen as a bridge of spiritual connection rather than an object of doubt. Its presence is a testament to the boundless energy of the Buddha’s teachings and the profound mysteries that reside within the realm of faith. Just as the droplets on a cup remind us of unseen forces at work, so too does the relic remind humanity of the transformative power of devotion, inspiring all to walk the path of enlightenment with trust and humility.

"I look forward to visiting the Singapore Tooth Relics Temple to pay my respects and worship the sacred Tooth Relics in the future. Additionally, I am eager to explore opportunities for collaboration on educational and peace programs." "As they have extensive experience in worshiping and preserving the Tooth Relics over the years, I am eager to learn from their valuable knowledge and practices." Bhikkhu Indasoama Author , Researcher

36. Why Tooth Relics Preservation Refuses DNA and Carbon-14 Testing?

The refusal to subject Tooth Relics to DNA and Carbon-14 testing arises from a deep intersection of spiritual, cultural, and ethical considerations. These relics, revered as tangible connections to the Buddha's life, carry immense religious significance for millions of practitioners worldwide. The question of testing them scientifically challenges the boundary between faith and empirical inquiry, making it a sensitive and controversial issue.

1. Spiritual Important Over Scientific Validation

Buddha Tooth Relics are not just physical artifacts but sacred symbols of devotion, veneration, and faith. They are enshrined in temples and worshipped as embodiments of the Buddha's spiritual essence. For the faithful, their authenticity is rooted in centuries of unbroken tradition and spiritual conviction, not in scientific evidence. Subjecting these relics to invasive testing could be seen as an affront to the sanctity of their spiritual value, reducing them to mere objects of curiosity.

2. Ethical Concerns and Preservation

Scientific testing, especially methods like DNA extraction or Carbon-14 dating, requires the destruction of a portion of the relic. Even with highly sensitive techniques like Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS), the amount of material required—ranging from 0.5 to 1 gram—represents a significant loss, considering the typical weight of a tooth (0.5 to 2.3 grams). For centuries, custodians of these relics have prioritized preservation, ensuring that future generations can continue to venerate them. Any destructive procedure is perceived as a violation of this sacred duty.

3. Cultural and Historical Legacy

The origins of Buddha Tooth Relics are steeped in legend and cultural heritage. These relics have been revered in countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China, and India for millennia. The narrative surrounding these relics, passed down through generations, forms an integral part of their identity. Scientific testing, even if it produces conclusive results, could disrupt this deeply ingrained cultural narrative. Such results may risk diminishing their revered status or causing unnecessary controversy among devotees.

4. Faith Beyond Scientific Proof

For many practitioners, the question of whether the relics are biologically the Buddha's is irrelevant. Faith operates on a different plane than scientific validation. The relics are powerful symbols of the Buddha's teachings, inspiring ethical living, mindfulness, and compassion. The emphasis is on their role in spiritual practice, rather than their material authenticity.

5. Avoiding Division and Controversy

The results of scientific testing could potentially spark disputes within the Buddhist community. Conflicting interpretations or skepticism towards findings might lead to divisions among followers, undermining the unity and harmony that the relics are meant to inspire. In this context, preserving the relics without subjecting them to testing serves as a means to maintain peace and respect among diverse Buddhist traditions.

6. Respect for Tradition and Custodianship

Custodians of Buddha Tooth Relics are often bound by strict religious protocols and vows. Their responsibility is to protect these relics according to centuries-old traditions, which prioritize veneration and preservation over scientific inquiry. Testing could be seen as a breach of their sacred duty and an act of disrespect towards the Buddha and the lineage of devotees who have revered the relics.

Conclusion

Refusal to test Buddha Tooth Relics using DNA and Carbon-14 stems from profound spiritual, cultural, and ethical considerations. These relics, deeply revered by millions as tangible links to the Buddha, hold immense religious significance. Scientific testing challenges the faith-empiricism boundary, creating a sensitive issue. Testing is considered an affront to their sanctity, reducing them to mere artifacts rather than sacred symbols of devotion and faith. Furthermore, such testing, even with sensitive methods, necessitates destructive sampling, violating both preservation efforts and the custodians' sacred duty. The relics' legendary origins and millennia-long veneration across diverse cultures form an integral part of their identity; testing risks disrupting this narrative. For many, the relics' biological authenticity is irrelevant; their spiritual power transcends scientific proof, fostering ethical living and compassion. Testing could also divide the Buddhist community, undermining the unity and harmony the relics represent. Finally, custodians are bound by tradition to prioritize veneration and preservation, making testing a breach of their sacred duty. The refusal to test prioritizes faith, preservation, and cultural integrity over empirical inquiry, ensuring the relics' enduring spiritual influence.

The refusal to conduct DNA and Carbon-14 testing on Buddha Tooth Relics is not a rejection of science but a choice to prioritize faith, preservation, and cultural integrity over empirical inquiry. These relics hold a significance that transcends material authenticity, inspiring millions through their spiritual presence. Respecting this sacred status ensures that their role as symbols of the Buddha’s teachings and sources of spiritual inspiration remains undiminished for generations to come.

Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahapalaka

Researcher

37. The Buddha Tooth Relics and Sao Dhammasami

One peaceful night, after receiving a precious Buddha Tooth Relic, Sao Dhammasami sat in quiet meditation. The weight of the ancient relic filled him with a deep sense of reverence and responsibility. That night, as he lay down to rest, a vivid dream swept him into another time, another world. In his dream, Sao Dhammasami found himself standing before an ancient stupa, its structure bearing the distinct style of Gandharan art—elegant, yet weathered by time.

The stupa stood tall and majestic, its surface adorned with carvings that whispered stories of devotion and faith. As he moved closer, he could feel an invisible force beckoning him to step inside. He entered the stupa and found himself in a vast, circular chamber.

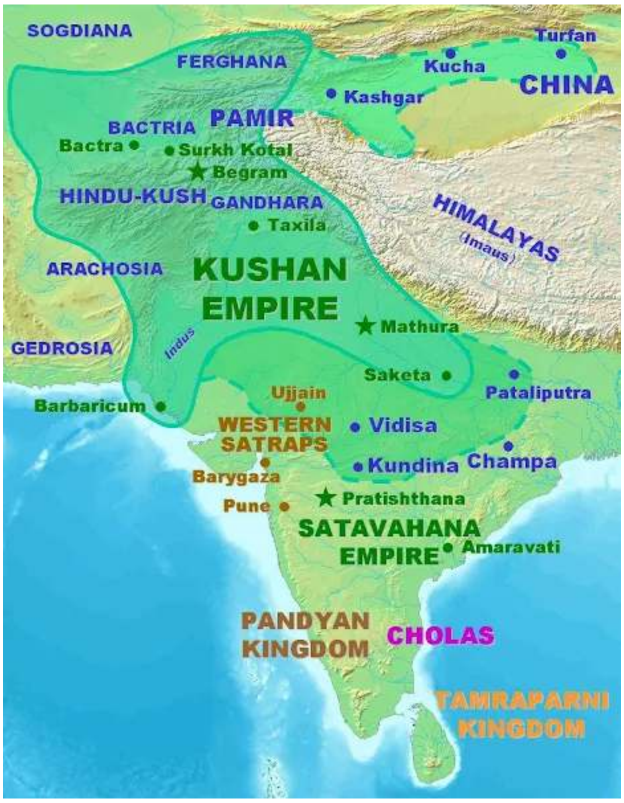
The air felt sacred, and the space inside was illuminated by a soft, ethereal glow. The chamber was large enough for him to walk freely, yet the energy of the place was centered on something grand at the heart of the stupa. Sao Dhammasami's eyes were drawn to a pedestal at the center of the room, upon which rested two glowing objects. His breath caught in his throat as he realized what they were—two more Buddha Tooth Relics, their presence radiant, filling the space with a divine aura.

The relics shimmered in the dim light, their brilliance beyond the material world. They seemed to pulsate with an ancient energy, as if they held the wisdom of countless ages. Sao Dhammasami could feel their significance; these relics were not mere artifacts, but living symbols of the Buddha's eternal presence.

They had found their way here, to him, through a mysterious and sacred connection. Beside the relics lay an ancient coin or medallion, its surface worn yet unmistakably precious. The coin seemed to be from the Kushan dynasty, a time long past but forever linked to the spread of Buddhism. Sao Dhammasami could see the image of a ruler on one side, regal and dignified, while the other side bore a sacred symbol—a deity or a representation of faith. This coin, too, held a story, perhaps one of a time when kings and emperors sought to align their rule with the divine teachings of the Buddha.

As he stood before these relics, Sao Dhammasami felt a powerful message within the dream. The two Buddha Tooth Relics were destined to come into his care, just as the first had.

The ancient stupa, the shining relics, and the Kushan coin all pointed to a destiny woven by the hands of history and karma. It was a sign, a vision of what was to come. The dream lingered as Sao Dhammasami woke, the vivid details still fresh in his mind. He sat in silence, contemplating the profound vision. The Buddha Tooth Relics had a journey of their own, and they were destined to be with him, their guardian. The ancient coin, a relic from a time when Buddhism flourished across empires, was a reminder of the sacred responsibility he bore.


SOGDIANA
Turfan
FERGHANA
Kucha
CHINA
Kashgar
PAMIR
BACTRIA
Bactra
Surkh Kotal
Begram
HINDU-KUSH
GANDHARA
Taxila
HIMALAYAS
(Imaus)
ARACHOSIA
KUSHAN EMPIRE
Mathura
GEDROSIA
Indus
Saketa
Pataliputra
Ujjain
Barbaricum
WESTERN SATRAPS
Vidisa
Kundina
Champa
Barygaza
Pune
Pratishthana
SATAVAHANA EMPIRE
Amaravati
PANDYAN KINGDOM
CHOLAS
TAMRAPARNI KINGDOM

In the days that followed, Sao Dhammasami carried the dream with him, knowing that it was not just a product of the night but a message from a higher realm. The relics would come, and with them, the ancient wisdom that transcends time, guiding him and those who would come to honor the sacred remains of the Buddha.

38. The Dream of the Sacred Relics : The Scholar's Discovery of the Dreamt Coil

In the stillness of the night, amidst the whispers of the wind and the gentle sway of trees, a dream unfolded in the realm of Sao Dhammasami, a sanctuary of spiritual serenity. Within the depths of slumber, the ethereal veil lifted, revealing a vision laden with mystique and sacred significance. Sao Dhammasami, the custodian of this revered sanctuary, found himself traversing the realms of dream and reality.

In the embrace of his nocturnal journey, he witnessed a profound encounter that would linger in his consciousness long after awakening. As he walked through the hallowed halls of the stupas, each step resonated with reverence and anticipation. The air hummed with an otherworldly energy, drawing him closer to the heart of the enshrined relics. With each passing moment, the ethereal glow of spiritual connection illuminated his path. Upon reaching the center of the sanctum, Sao Dhammasami beheld a sight of awe-inspiring wonder.

Two tooth relics, gleaming with timeless radiance, stood as beacons of transcendence. Their presence exuded a palpable sense of guardianship, as if watching over the sanctity of the space. But amidst the divine spectacle, another revelation unfolded—a golden coil, delicately adorned and nestled beside the relics. Its intricate design whispered tales of ancient wisdom and sacred lineage, a testament to the enduring legacy of spiritual heritage. In this ethereal realm, time seemed to stand still as Sao Dhammasami basked in the aura of this celestial communion.

The guardianship of the relics and the spiritual resonance of the golden coil intertwined, weaving a tapestry of profound significance that transcended the boundaries of mortal comprehension. As the dream gradually dissolved into the realms of waking reality, Sao Dhammasami carried with him the echoes of this sacred encounter. The memory lingered, a guiding light amidst the ebb and flow of earthly existence—a reminder of the eternal bond between the sacred and the sublime, woven into the fabric of his soul. In the quiet corridors of scholarly pursuit, where the echoes of history intertwine with the thirst for knowledge, a revelation emerged that would challenge the boundaries of understanding.

Amidst the pages of an archaeological paper, meticulously crafted by a dedicated scholar, lay a chapter of profound significance—one that mirrored the ethereal visions of Sao Dhammasami's dream.

As the scholar delved into the annals of antiquity, tracing the footsteps of civilizations long gone, a serendipitous encounter unfolded.

Buried within the depths of excavation sites, amidst the rubble of ages past, lay a relic of unparalleled beauty—a golden coil, intricately wrought with symbols of spiritual significance. With each delicate brushstroke and meticulous examination, the scholar unearthed the enigmatic tale woven within the coils of gold. It spoke of a lineage stretching back through the corridors of time, a testament to the enduring legacy of spiritual heritage that transcended the confines of mortal understanding.

Yet, as the scholar pieced together the fragments of history, a revelation dawned—one that mirrored the dreams of Sao Dhammasami in eerie resonance. For within the pages of the archaeological paper lay a narrative of discovery that echoed the sacred vision that had stirred the depths of the custodian's soul. The scholar's findings breathed life into the ethereal realms of dreams, bridging the gap between the tangible and the transcendent.

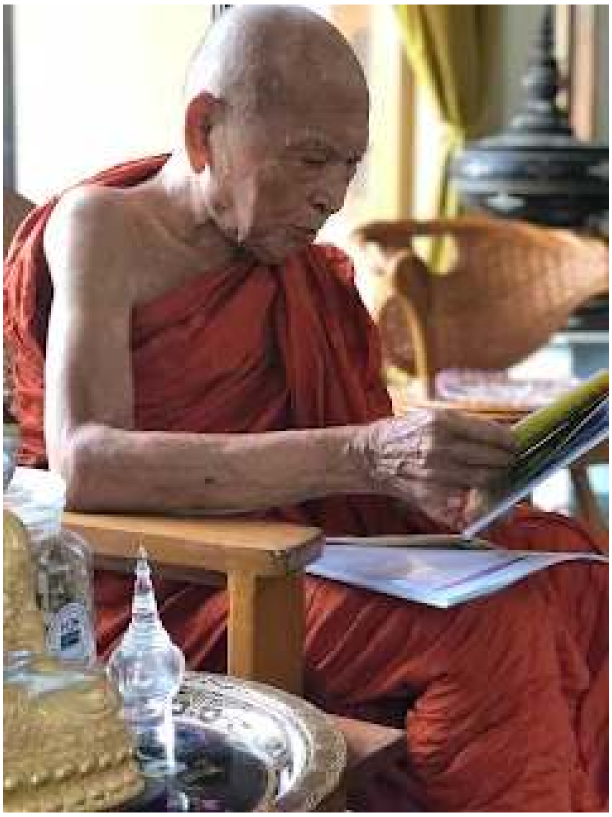
It was as if the echoes of Sao Dhammasami's nocturnal journey had reverberated through the corridors of time, guiding the scholar's hand to uncover the mysteries hidden beneath layers of history. In the nexus of scholarship and spirituality, the discovery of the dreamt coil illuminated a path of revelation—a testament to the interconnectedness of all things, where dreams and reality intertwine in a dance of cosmic significance.

And as the scholar's words echoed through the annals of academia, they carried with them the resonance of a truth that transcended the confines of empirical understanding—an acknowledgment of the mystical bond between the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknowable.

39. Ba Maw Sayardawgyi's Receive Two Buddha Tooth Relics

In the noble pursuit of relic preservation, the profound guidance and unwavering dedication of Ba Maw Sayardawgyi have illuminated the path forward, shaping the direction of this sacred endeavor. The President of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee extends heartfelt gratitude to Ba Maw Sayardawgyi for his invaluable contributions, which have enriched the understanding and significance of relic preservation.

Ba Maw Sayardawgyi's expertise, insights, and commitment to safeguarding sacred artifacts have been instrumental in the preservation efforts surrounding precious relics. His profound knowledge and unwavering dedication serve as a guiding light, inspiring a deeper sense of responsibility in the preservation of cultural and spiritual heritage.



The recent reception of precious Buddha Tooth Relics, along with hair, bone, ashes, and revered Arahat Relics generously donated by HGT, a marks a significant milestone in the preservation of Buddhist heritage. With deep reverence and gratitude, Ba Maw Sayardawgyi received these sacred Two of Tooth relics, along with the Hswagata Documents, acknowledging their profound significance in the spiritual tapestry of humanity.

The wisdom generously shared by Ba Maw Sayardawgyi has contributed to the authenticity and depth of research surrounding relic preservation. His unwavering commitment to this noble cause is a testament to his profound reverence for cultural and spiritual heritage, inspiring reverence and admiration among all those dedicated to this sacred pursuit.

In offering sincere thanks and appreciation to Ba Maw Sayardawgyi, the President of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee recognizes his indispensable role in preserving the legacy of sacred relics for future generations. Through his guidance and steadfast commitment, Ba Maw Sayardawgyi continues to illuminate the path forward, ensuring that the treasures of our shared spiritual heritage endure for generations to come.

40. Devotion at Hswagata Yangon: Worshiping the Tooth of the Lord Buddha

In January 2022, at the sacred Hswagata Yangon temple in Myanmar, devout followers gathered to pay homage to the revered tooth relics of the Lord Buddha. The air was filled with a sense of reverence and devotion as worshippers arrived, carrying offerings of food, flowers, and water as symbols of their respect and gratitude.

The temple grounds buzzed with activity as devotees meticulously arranged their offerings before the sacred shrine, ensuring each item was presented with the utmost care and sincerity. Bowls of steaming rice, fragrant incense sticks, vibrant garlands of flowers, and pitchers of clean water adorned the altar, creating a picturesque scene of devotion and piety.

As the soft glow of candlelight flickered in the dimly lit temple, worshippers bowed their heads in silent prayer, their hearts filled with reverence for the divine presence of the Lord Buddha. The sound of murmured chants and gentle hymns filled the air, echoing through the sacred halls and resonating with the collective spirit of the faithful.

With each heartfelt offering and fervent prayer, the devotees expressed their deep reverence and unwavering faith in the teachings of the Buddha. Their acts of devotion served as a testament to their profound connection to the spiritual realm and their commitment to walking the path of enlightenment.

In the tranquil sanctuary of Hswagata Yangon temple, amidst the serenity of the sacred space, worshippers found solace and inspiration in the timeless wisdom of the Buddha. It was a moment of profound significance, a sacred communion between the earthly and the divine, as devotees humbly bowed before the tooth of the Lord, seeking blessings and guidance on their journey towards enlightenment.

41. The Enigmatic Nature of Relics

Relics, particularly those associated with the Buddha, have long been revered as sacred objects imbued with spiritual significance. Among the myriad narratives that surround these artifacts, one particularly captivating tale involves the mystical interactions between worshippers and Naga, the serpent-like beings of mythology.

According to tradition, when devotees transport Buddha's relics, such as sacred hairs, to their hometowns, they may encounter Naga who, in their divine mischief, seize the relics from the hands of the faithful. This narrative underscores the belief that the power of the relics transcends the physical realm. It is said that those who possess supernatural abilities, such as the capacity to fly, must descend to the earth when they encounter the presence of Buddha's relics or those of arahants.

This act of reverence—landing to worship the relics—reinforces the idea that even those endowed with extraordinary powers are compelled to honor the sacred. Such stories have been passed down through generations, illustrating the deep reverence and mystical aura surrounding these relics.

My own encounter with the mysterious nature of relics occurred in 2021 while my team and I were preparing to create a replica of a revered tooth relic. During this process, I held the original tooth relic in my hand, only for it to inexplicably vanish before my eyes. Despite a thorough search of the room, the relic remained elusive, prompting my team members to return hastily to assist in the search. This experience not only left me bewildered but also resonated with similar accounts I discovered in the archives of the British Museum.

Their records documented instances of relics disappearing under secure conditions, echoing my own extraordinary experience. These narratives, both ancient and contemporary, invite reflection on the nature of relics and the profound mysteries they embody.

The stories of Naga and the inexplicable disappearance of sacred objects suggest that relics are not merely physical artifacts; they are vessels of spiritual power that can challenge our understanding of reality.

As we continue to explore these narratives, we are reminded of the enduring significance of relics in our cultural and spiritual heritage, and the mysteries that remain intertwined with their existence.

42. A Study of Unexpected Increases

The study of relics, particularly those characterized by their golden and white hues, presents intriguing phenomena that warrant further examination. One notable observation involves the containment of these relics within sealed bottles. Typically, when we place ten pieces of relics into a bottle and subsequently seal it, we expect the quantity to remain constant. However, upon later inspection, we often discover an unexpected increase in the number of relics present.

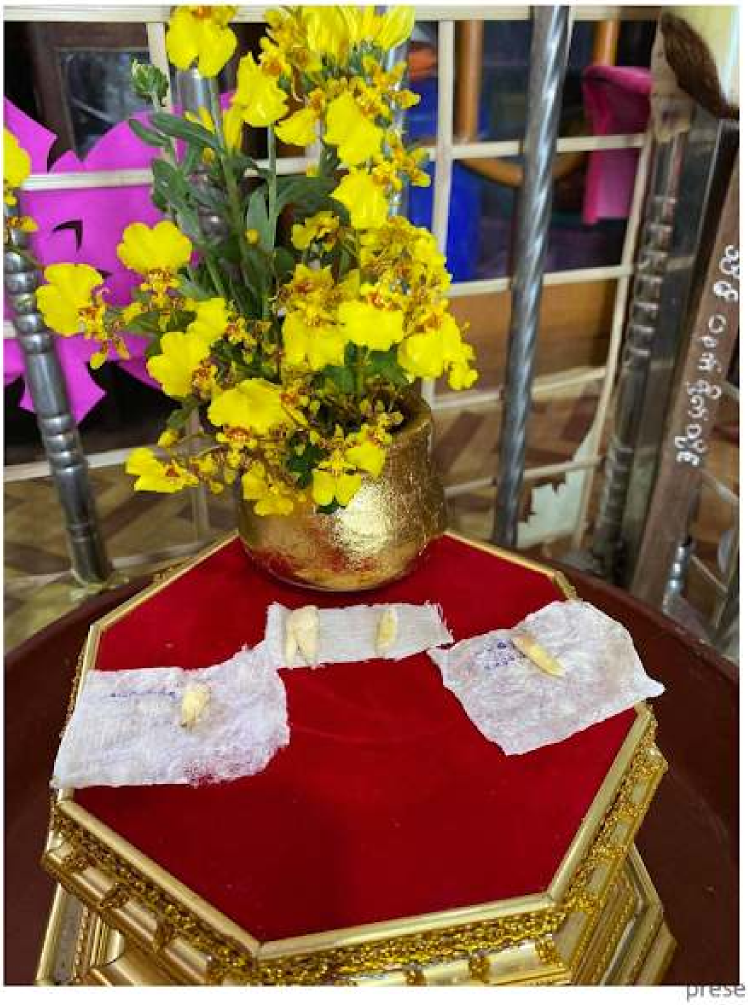
This phenomenon raises several questions regarding the underlying causes of such anomalies. The sealed environment of the bottle should theoretically prevent any external factors from contributing to the apparent multiplication of the relics.

Nevertheless, the consistent emergence of additional relics suggests the possibility of unknown mechanisms at play, challenging our understanding of preservation and containment. The implications of these findings are significant.

They not only prompt a reevaluation of our methods of relic preservation but also invite further investigation into the nature of these artifacts themselves. Are there properties inherent to the relics that allow for such duplication, or do external environmental factors, previously unconsidered, play a role in this process?

The unexpected increase in the number of relics within sealed bottles highlights the need for a deeper exploration of these artifacts. Understanding the factors contributing to this phenomenon could enhance our approach to relic preservation and enrich our knowledge of their intrinsic qualities.

43. The Historic Creation of Copied Tooth Relics



On October 20, 2022, a significant milestone in the preservation and veneration of sacred relics was achieved under the leadership of the Founder of Hswagata, Venerable Sao Dhammasami, and the Co-Founder, Venerable Ashin Indaka.

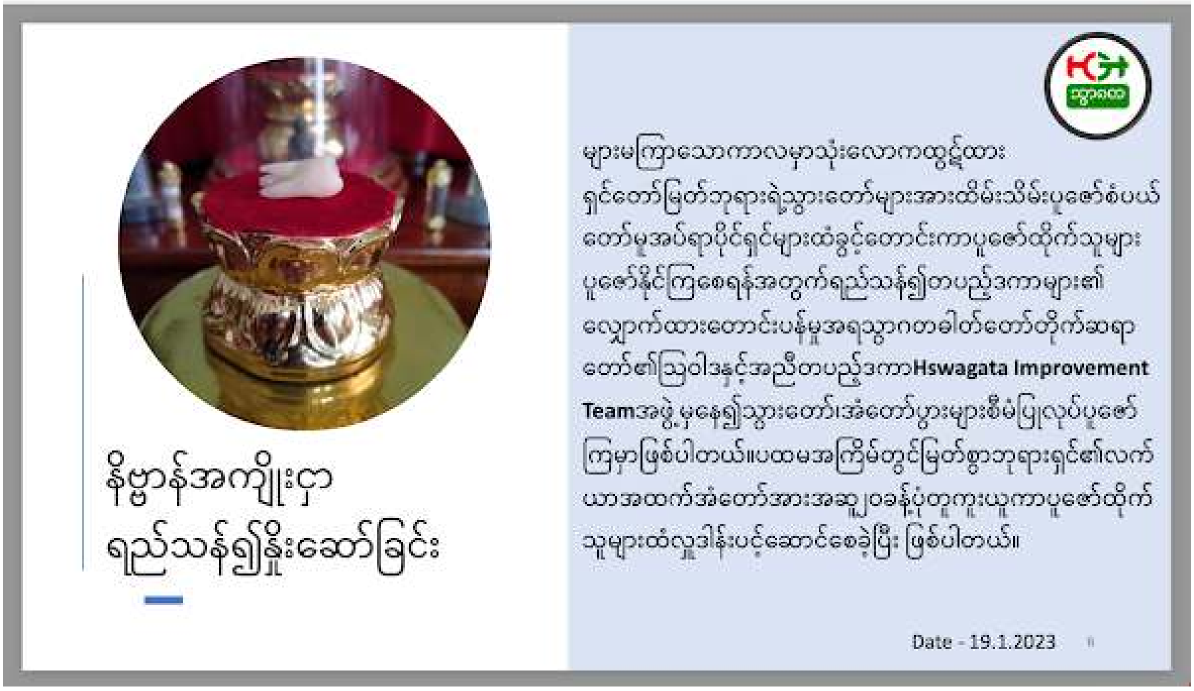
The occasion was marked by the collaborative efforts of Mr. Htin Kyaw Hlaing, a senior member of Hswagata, and Mr. Thura Kyaw, Vice Chairperson of the Central Executive Committee (CEC), alongside other dedicated members. For the first time in history, twenty replicas of each of the following sacred relics were carefully crafted and consecrated: Right Upper Molar Tooth Relic A Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha Tooth Relic of Venerable Ashin Sāriputta (Sāriputra) — Revered for his unparalleled wisdom. Tooth Relic of Venerable Mahāmoggallāna (Moggallāna) — Renowned for his extraordinary supernatural abilities.

ပထမအကြိမ် သွားတော်ပွားများစီမံပူဇော်ကြစဉ်
ဆရာတော် ဦးဣန္ဒကနှင့် ဦးဓမ္မသာမိ(သွာဂတ) ဆရာတော်
နှစ်ပါးတို့မှ စီစဉ်ပူဇော်နေကြပုံ

Purpose and Approval The creation of these replicas was initiated in response to the heartfelt requests of devotees who wished to have the opportunity to venerate these sacred objects. Understanding the spiritual significance and the reverence held by many, both founders, Venerable Sao Dhammasami and Venerable Ashin Indaka, offered their guidance and formal approval for the crafting of these relic copies.

This endeavor reflects the compassionate commitment of Hswagata's leadership to uphold the veneration of the sacred and to extend the opportunity for worship to a wider community of devotees. The replication process was carried out with the utmost respect and adherence to traditional and ethical practices, ensuring the sanctity of the relics.

Legacy and Global Significance This historic initiative not only strengthens the spiritual connection among devotees but also preserves the sacred heritage associated with the relics of the Buddha and his foremost disciples. By granting permission for the creation of these copies, the founders have set a precedent for mindful preservation and respectful worship.



နိဗ္ဗာန်အကျိုးငှာ
ရည်သန်၍နှိုးဆော်ခြင်း

များမကြာသောကာလမှာသုံးလောကထွဋ်ထား
ရှင်တော်မြတ်ဘုရားရဲ့သွားတော်များအားထိမ်းသိမ်းပူဇော်စံပယ်
တော်မူအပ်ရာပိုင်ရှင်များထံခွင့်တောင်းကာပူဇော်ထိုက်သူများ
ပူဇော်နိုင်ကြစေရန်အတွက်ရည်သန်၍တပည့်ဒကာများ၏
လျှောက်ထားတောင်းပန်မှုအရသွာဂတဓါတ်တော်တိုက်ဆရာ
တော်၏သြဝါဒနှင့်အညီတပည့်ဒကာ**Hswagata Improvement**
Teamအဖွဲ့မှနေ၍သွားတော်အံတော်ပွားများစီမံပြုလုပ်ပူဇော်
ကြမှာဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ပထမအကြိမ်တွင်မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်၏လက်
ယာအထက်အံတော်အားအဆ၂၀ခန့်ပုံတူကူးယူကာပူဇော်ထိုက်
သူများထံလှူဒါန်းပင့်ဆောင်စေခဲ့ပြီး ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။

Date - 19.1.2023 ။

The event remains a testament to the unity and shared purpose within the Hswagata community and its enduring mission to spread the teachings of the Buddha and honor the legacy of his closest disciples. This collective effort serves as a beacon of devotion, inspiring generations to come.

44. Faith and the Unseen Force: The Monk's Awakening

During one of my trips to Sri Lanka, I carried with me a precious vial of **Blood Plasma Relics**, revered for their spiritual and historical significance. The atmosphere was calm and reverent as I sat in a quiet room with two other monks. We arranged ourselves in a triangular formation, sitting face-to-face, engaged in a profound discussion about the relics and their divine presence.

One of the monks, however, appeared skeptical about the authenticity of the relics. Despite the reverence that surrounded them, he harbored doubts and expressed his disbelief openly. His curiosity soon overcame his hesitation, and he asked if he could smell and even taste the blood plasma relics to confirm their authenticity with his own senses. His request was unexpected, yet I remained calm, understanding his inner conflict between doubt and faith.

As the monk leaned in closer, something inexplicable and extraordinary occurred. From behind him, an unseen force struck the back of his head with immense intensity. The impact was so sudden and forceful that he jerked forward in shock. His face turned pale with fear, and his eyes widened as if he had encountered an immense, invisible presence. In that moment, he described the sensation as if a being of colossal strength had delivered a powerful blow or kick.

Bewildered and frightened, the monk leapt to his feet and fled the room, his robes trailing behind him as he hurried out. The room fell silent as I exchanged glances with the other monk, both of us aware that we had witnessed something beyond the ordinary—a manifestation of an unseen power.

A short time later, the frightened monk returned. His demeanor had shifted from skepticism to profound humility. With eyes lowered in reverence, he approached me and the relics, bowing deeply in apology. His voice trembled as he spoke words of contrition, acknowledging his doubts and expressing remorse for his actions. He conveyed his newfound belief in the sacredness of the relics and the presence of a force far greater than he could comprehend.

This experience left an indelible impression on all of us present. It was a poignant reminder that faith transcends the visible and tangible, and that the spiritual realm often reveals itself in ways beyond human understanding. The relics, imbued with profound history and spiritual resonance, had served as a vessel through which a supernatural phenomenon unfolded, guiding a once-skeptical heart toward reverence and belief.

To this day, the memory of that encounter stands as a testament to the mysterious and awe-inspiring nature of the sacred relics. It serves as a humbling reminder of the unseen forces that surround and protect the sacred treasures of the Dhamma.

Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka)
Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer
Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

45. The Bone Ashes Relics Findings

The search for ancient relics, particularly those associated with the life of the Buddha, has long fascinated historians and archaeologists. Among the most significant relic discoveries were the findings of Charles Masson, a British explorer and archaeologist who uncovered some of the most extraordinary Buddhist stupas and remains in the 19th century.

His contributions to the field of archaeology shed light on ancient India's spiritual legacy and the posthumous reverence of the Buddha's remains. Charles Masson: The Accidental Archaeologist Charles Masson, born James Lewis, defected from the British East India Company's army in 1827 and traveled through the regions of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan under an assumed name. Although initially driven by personal circumstances, Masson's travels soon turned into one of the most impactful archaeological journeys of his time. Masson's interest in antiquities led him to excavate numerous Buddhist stupas—relic mounds where remains such as bone fragments, ashes, and sacred objects were enshrined.

His findings, recorded in the early 1830s and documented in his book "Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, and the Punjab", transformed historical knowledge of early Buddhist practices and revealed Old India's rich monastic traditions. The Discovery of Bone Ash Relics One of Masson's most significant contributions was the excavation of the stupa at Bimaran, located near Jalalabad in Afghanistan. Inside this stupa, Masson discovered relic deposits, including bone ashes, believed to be associated with early Buddhist saints or disciples of the Buddha.

The most remarkable item found at the site was the Bimaran Casket, a gilded container that housed sacred relics. This casket featured depictions of the Buddha and was dated to around the 1st century CE, a testament to the reverence shown toward the Buddha's remains during the Kushan era. The relics found at Bimaran, particularly the ash and bone fragments, have been interpreted as evidence of the Buddhist tradition of dividing the Buddha's remains among his followers and enshrining them in stupas.

According to ancient texts, after the Buddha's Mahaparinibbana (final passing), his body was cremated, and the ashes and bones were distributed to various kingdoms and Buddhist communities. These relics became focal points for pilgrimage and devotion, symbolizing the eternal presence of the Buddha. Buddhist Stupas and the Veneration of Relics Masson's discoveries provided archaeological evidence for the ancient tradition of relic veneration. In the Buddhist worldview, the remains of the Buddha and his enlightened disciples were not merely human remains but sacred objects imbued with spiritual significance.

Relics were believed to radiate blessings and were enshrined in stupas as a way for devotees to connect with the enlightened teachings. The finding of bone relics in stupas by Masson affirmed ancient textual references, such as those found in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, which describe the cremation of the Buddha and the enshrinement of his remains. This practice led to the creation of an extensive network of stupas across ancient India and neighboring regions, many of which became sites of pilgrimage and centers for the spread of Buddhist teachings. The Legacy of Masson's Relic Findings Charles Masson's discoveries left an indelible mark on the historical understanding of Buddhism and ancient India.

His documentation of the Bimaran stupa relics, including the bone ashes, provided crucial insights into the spread of Buddhism beyond the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, his excavation techniques, though rudimentary by modern standards, inspired subsequent generations of archaeologists and historians to continue the exploration of ancient stupas and relic sites.

The bone ash relics that Masson uncovered are preserved in various museums, such as the British Museum, where they remain objects of scholarly research and public fascination. However, Masson's work also raises ethical questions about the removal and relocation of sacred objects from their original cultural and spiritual contexts. Today, many Buddhist communities view the return of relics to their places of origin as a matter of cultural preservation and spiritual restoration.

The findings of bone ashes and sacred relics by Charles Masson in Old India and neighboring regions symbolize a remarkable chapter in the historical study of Buddhism. These relics serve as tangible reminders of a spiritual tradition that continues to inspire millions around the world. Masson's accidental yet profound contributions remind us of the enduring connection between history, archaeology, and spirituality.

His work not only uncovered ancient treasures but also sparked a deeper understanding of the reverence and ritual surrounding the Buddha's remains in the ancient Buddhist world. Through these findings, the narrative of Buddhist devotion, relic veneration, and pilgrimage unfolds, offering a glimpse into a time when the ashes and bones of enlightened beings represented hope, reverence, and the promise of liberation. Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka) Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

46. The Broken Bone Relics Findings in Old India

The discovery of broken bone relics in Old India offers a significant insight into the history of Buddhism, the veneration of sacred remains, and the tumultuous past of ancient stupas. The British Museum houses many of these relics, which were uncovered during the colonial era by explorers and archaeologists like Charles Masson, Alexander Cunningham, and others. These relics, often fragmented or incomplete, tell a deeper story of devotion, destruction, and preservation over centuries. Historical Context of Relic Veneration in Ancient India The tradition of enshrining relics of the Buddha and his disciples began after the Buddha's passing (Mahaparinibbāna).

According to Buddhist texts, after the Buddha was cremated, his ashes and bones were divided among eight kingdoms, and stupas were constructed to house these relics. This tradition extended to relics of prominent Buddhist saints, leading to the establishment of stupas throughout India, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.

Relics were often revered as sacred symbols of the Buddha's continued spiritual presence. However, over the centuries, stupas were subjected to natural decay, treasure hunting, invasions, and religious upheavals, leading to the fragmentation and loss of many relics. The British Museum and Relic Discoveries The British Museum contains several notable relics collected during the 19th and early 20th centuries, including bone fragments and ashes housed in reliquary caskets. The most famous among these relic collections are associated with excavations led by Charles Masson in the Gandhara region (modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Sir Alexander Cunningham in sites across northern India.

Some of the key findings related to broken bone relics include: The Bimaran Casket (1st Century CE) Discovered by Charles Masson at a stupa near Jalalabad, the Bimaran Casket contained broken bone fragments believed to be relics of early Buddhist figures. The casket itself is a finely crafted gold and silver container adorned with images of the Buddha. The bone fragments within the casket were likely part of larger relics that had become broken over time due to burial practices, stupa renovations, or looting. The Piprahwa Stupa (Uttar Pradesh, India) In 1898, British archaeologist William Claxton Peppe excavated the Piprahwa stupa and discovered a large stone coffer containing bone fragments and an inscription suggesting they belonged to the Śākyas, the Buddha's clan.

The relics were found in a fragmented state, likely due to the stupa's reconstruction and the damage caused by time. Taxila Stupas (Pakistan) Excavations in the early 20th century at Dharmarajika and other Taxila stupas revealed broken and burnt bone fragments.

The British Museum acquired some of these relics, which are believed to be the remains of Buddhist monks or revered disciples. Many of these bones were incomplete due to invasions, especially during the Hunnic period (5th–6th century CE), when Buddhist stupas were desecrated. Causes of Broken Relics The broken nature of many bone relics found in Old India can be attributed to several historical events and practices: Invasions and Religious Conflicts Buddhist stupas were often desecrated by invaders who sought treasure or opposed Buddhism.

The Turkish invasions during the medieval period and Muslim conquests of India saw widespread destruction of monasteries and relic shrines. Treasure Hunting During the colonial era, stupas were frequently looted by treasure hunters, who often damaged the contents in their quest for valuable reliquaries. Natural Decay and Reconstruction Many ancient stupas underwent multiple phases of construction and repair. The relics enshrined within were often disturbed or relocated, leading to fragmentation.

Fire and Burial Conditions Some bone relics show signs of burning, indicating cremation practices or fires that damaged the relic chambers.

Significance of the Relic Findings Despite their fragmented state, these bone relics remain profoundly significant for both historical and religious reasons: Historical Evidence of Buddhism's Spread The discovery of bone relics in Gandhara, Taxila, and central India provides archaeological evidence of the widespread practice of relic worship and the establishment of Buddhist centers across the Indian subcontinent.

Symbol of Devotion and Preservation The reverence shown by devotees, who often reconstructed stupas and continued to venerate relics despite their fragmented condition, illustrates the enduring importance of these sacred remains. Cultural Legacy The relics housed in institutions like the British Museum serve as reminders of ancient India's spiritual heritage and have become focal points for scholarly research and public education. Ethical Considerations and Repatriation The presence of relics in Western museums has sparked debates about cultural heritage and spiritual ownership.

Many Buddhist communities advocate for the return of these sacred objects to their places of origin, emphasizing the spiritual significance of relics as living symbols of the Buddha's teachings. The discovery of broken bone relics in Old India, as documented in the archives of the British Museum and other institutions, reflects both the glory and fragility of an ancient spiritual tradition. While these relics bear the scars of history—fractured by time, invasions, and human greed—they also carry stories of resilience and reverence. Whether preserved in stupas or museum displays, these sacred remains continue to inspire reverence and curiosity, serving as a bridge between the past and the present.

They remind us of the enduring legacy of the Buddha's teachings and the need to preserve cultural heritage with respect and understanding. Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka) Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

47. The Robes of the Buddha (or) The robes, often referred to as "cīvara" in Pali

The robes of the Buddha hold profound symbolic and historical significance, representing not only the renunciation of worldly attachments but also the adherence to a disciplined and compassionate way of life. The robes, often referred to as "cīvara" in Pali, became a defining feature of the Buddhist monastic tradition.

Archaeological findings, including those documented in publications by the British Museum, shed light on the relics and fragments believed to be associated with robes worn by the Buddha or venerated as sacred objects by his followers. The Symbolism of the Buddha's Robes The Buddha's robes symbolize simplicity, humility, and detachment.

According to Buddhist texts, after his renunciation, Prince Siddhartha fashioned his first robe from discarded cloth and cremation shrouds. This symbolic gesture highlighted his transition from luxury to the ascetic life. His disciples adopted the same practice, and the three-part robe (tricīvara) became the standard attire for monastics: Sāṅghāti (Outer Robe) – A large, rectangular robe worn during formal gatherings. Uttarāsaṅga (Upper Robe) – A robe draped over both shoulders during ceremonies or over one shoulder during meditation and daily tasks. Antaravāsaka (Inner Robe) – A lower garment wrapped around the waist, covering the body from the navel to the knees. The color of the robes, often in earthy tones such as saffron, ochre, or brown, symbolized purity, renunciation, and the absence of vanity.

Historical Accounts of the Buddha's Robes The Theravāda Buddhist tradition preserves detailed accounts of the Buddha's robes. The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, which recounts the Buddha's final days, mentions that upon his passing, his followers enshrined not only his bodily relics but also fragments of his robes. These relics were venerated for their connection to the Enlightened One and were placed in stupas to inspire devotion. One notable historical tradition involves Anāthapiṇḍika, a wealthy lay disciple, who offered the Buddha a finely woven robe. However, the Buddha is said to have preferred robes made from simple, discarded cloth.

This story emphasizes the Buddha's commitment to non-attachment and the ideal of contentment.

Archaeological Evidence of Robe Relics Several discoveries have been linked to ancient Buddhist relics associated with robes. Some of these findings have been documented in research supported by the British Museum, providing insight into monastic traditions and relic veneration. The Bimaran Casket (1st Century CE) Discovered by Charles Masson near Jalalabad, Afghanistan, the Bimaran Casket housed relics believed to include small fabric fragments associated with early Buddhist monastic attire.

Although the casket's contents primarily comprised bone relics and ashes, the mention of textile remnants in early reports led some scholars to speculate that they may have represented symbolic pieces of monastic robes. The Piprahwa Stupa (1898) During the excavation of the Piprahwa stupa in Uttar Pradesh, India, a stone coffer containing relics and inscriptions was uncovered. The inscriptions indicated that the coffer contained the remains of the Śākyan clan, possibly including fabric relics preserved as sacred reminders of the Buddha's life and teachings.

Taxila and Gandhara Sites (1st–4th Century CE) Excavations in the Gandhara region revealed reliquary caskets containing traces of textiles and offerings. These finds illustrate the ancient practice of placing symbolic garments, including representations of monastic robes, alongside bodily relics to signify devotion and respect. The British Museum's Textile Collection The British Museum holds fragments of ancient textiles from sites like Taxila, Mathura, and Sanchi, which may have served as votive offerings symbolizing robes.

These textiles provide valuable evidence of the weaving techniques and dyeing methods used in early Buddhist communities. The Robe as a Sacred Relic In the centuries following the Buddha's passing, his robes—like his bodily relics—became objects of veneration. Just as fragments of his bones and ashes were divided among kingdoms and placed in stupas, pieces of cloth believed to have been part of his robes were also distributed and enshrined. Some relics were symbolic rather than literal, representing the robes of enlightenment and humility.

This tradition was especially prominent in Sri Lanka, where the Mahāvaṃsa chronicles the enshrinement of relics and robes associated with the Buddha.

The introduction of the Pāṭimokkha (monastic code) further institutionalized the significance of wearing robes as a visible commitment to the monastic path. Challenges in Preservation and Authenticity The preservation of ancient textiles is inherently challenging due to the fragile nature of organic materials like cloth.

Many of the relics associated with robes found during early archaeological excavations were either severely degraded or lost due to improper handling during the colonial era. The fragments that survive today are rare and often require extensive conservation efforts. Questions of authenticity also arise when dealing with relics.

While some relics are venerated purely for their symbolic value, others are supported by inscriptions and historical records that trace their origins. Museums, including the British Museum, have faced calls for repatriation of these sacred objects to their countries of origin, where they hold profound spiritual significance.

Spiritual and Cultural Legacy of the Robes The robes of the Buddha and their symbolic counterparts continue to inspire reverence among Buddhists worldwide. Monks and nuns in the Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions wear robes modeled after the Buddha's original garments, reinforcing the legacy of simplicity and renunciation.

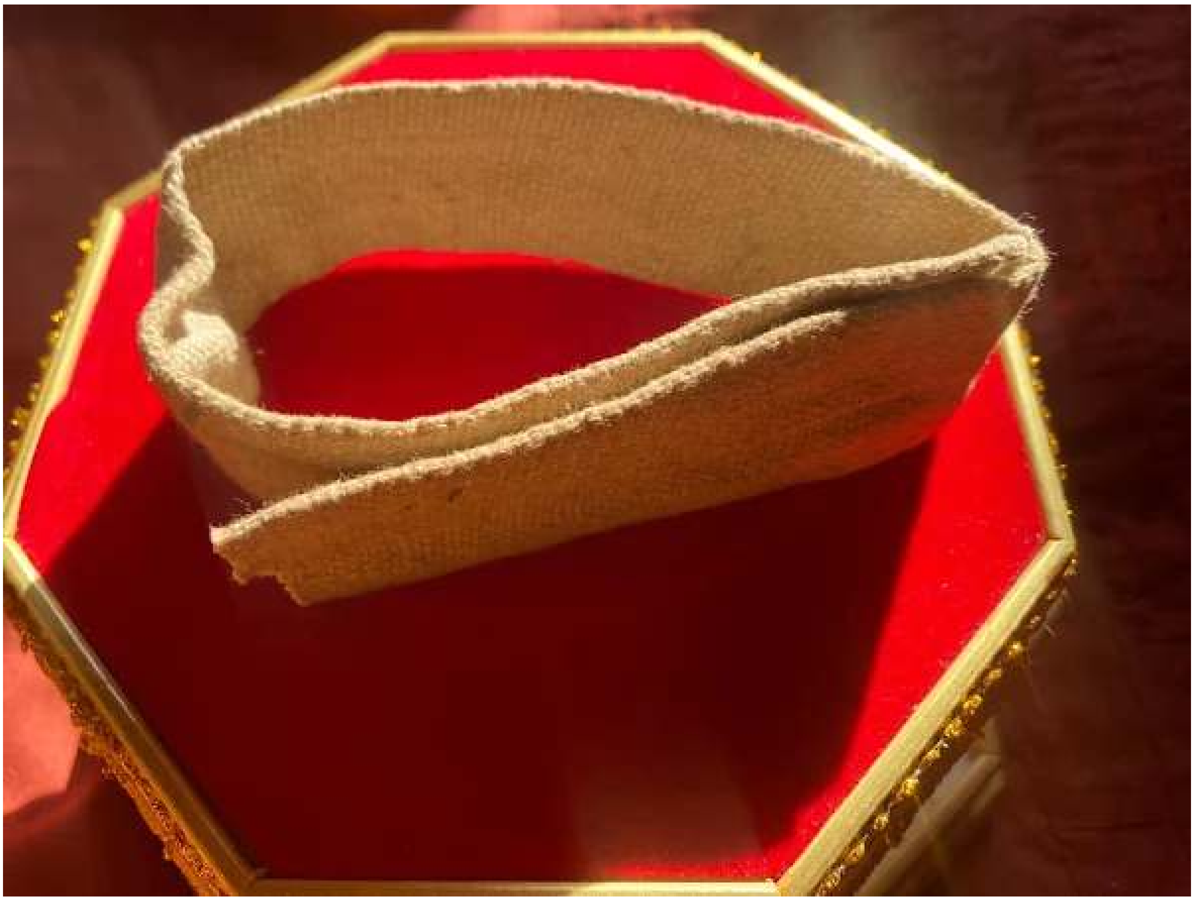
The act of offering robes (known as Kathina) remains a significant religious practice in many Buddhist communities, symbolizing generosity and the mutual support between the monastic community and lay followers. Robes are seen not merely as clothing but as a representation of the Dhamma—the teachings of the Buddha embodied in the daily life of those who choose the path of renunciation.

The historical and archaeological findings of robe relics, as documented in publications by the British Museum and other institutions, provide a tangible connection to the life of the Buddha and the early monastic tradition. Whether preserved as fragments in reliquaries or represented in ceremonial offerings, the robes of the Buddha continue to symbolize the core principles of the Buddhist path: humility, renunciation, and mindfulness.

These ancient textiles, though fragile, weave together a narrative of devotion and spiritual resilience that endures across generations and borders.

Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka)
Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer
Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

48. Bandhana: The Binding Cloth of the Buddha



The term "Bandhana" in Pali translates to "binding cloth" or "fastening fabric" in English. In ancient Buddhist tradition, bandhana was a piece of cloth used to wrap or bind objects of significance. In the context of the Buddha, bandhana holds special meaning, as it is believed that such binding cloths were used for various purposes, such as wrapping relics, securing the Buddha's personal items, or symbolically binding the sacred robes and relic caskets.

Records from archaeological excavations, including those documented by the British Museum, shed light on the discovery of ancient textiles believed to have served as bandhana in Buddhist religious practices. Symbolism and Use of Bandhana in Buddhist Tradition The bandhana was not an ordinary piece of cloth but held spiritual and ritual significance in several ways: Relic Wrapping: Bandhana cloths were often used to wrap relics of the Buddha or revered monks before enshrining them in stupas.

This practice symbolized protection, reverence, and the preservation of the sacred. Binding the Robe of the Buddha: There are accounts that during his travels, the Buddha used bandhana cloths to secure his robes, which were often folded and carried with care. These bandhanas were simple but symbolic of the disciplined and humble life of renunciation. Symbolic Binding: In later Buddhist traditions, bandhana cloths were used in rituals as a metaphor for binding oneself to the Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha), symbolizing commitment and restraint from unwholesome actions.

Historical and Archaeological Discoveries of Bandhana Cloths The British Museum and other institutions have preserved textiles and relic caskets that suggest the use of bandhana in ancient Buddhist rituals. Some of the significant findings include: The Bimaran Casket (1st Century CE) Unearthed by Charles Masson near Jalalabad, Afghanistan, the Bimaran Casket is a renowned gold and silver reliquary containing relics believed to be connected to early Buddhism. The inner contents of the casket were wrapped in layers of cloth, described in early excavation records as symbolic wrappings.

These layers served as bandhanas, used to secure and sanctify the sacred relics.

The Piprahwa Stupa (1898) During the excavation of the Piprahwa stupa in India, several stone containers were found with inscriptions referencing the Śākyan clan. Inside, bone fragments and ashes were discovered, wrapped in degraded layers of cloth that served as relic bindings or bandhanas. These findings highlight the reverence shown in wrapping the Buddha's relics to preserve their sanctity.

Gandhara and Taxila Relic Chambers (1st–4th Century CE) Excavations in Gandhara and Taxila revealed fragments of ancient textiles used to wrap and bind reliquary items. These textiles were simple but often dyed in natural colors such as saffron or ochre, representing the monastic robes. The British Museum holds some of these textile remnants, which, although worn and fragile, provide valuable insights into the craftsmanship and symbolic use of bandhana in Buddhist relic rituals.

Significance of Bandhana in Buddhist Heritage The use of bandhana cloths reflects deeper symbolic meanings within Buddhist traditions: Protection and Preservation Bandhanas were used to protect relics from damage and contamination, both physically and spiritually. The act of binding relics in cloth represented an offering of care and respect, acknowledging the sacredness of the relics.

Symbol of Discipline and Order Just as the Buddha's robes were bound and folded with precision, the bandhana became a metaphor for the discipline required on the path to enlightenment. The binding represented control over desires and the containment of the ego. Ritual Offering In some Buddhist rituals, offering a piece of cloth or bandhana became a symbolic gesture of one's commitment to the Dhamma.

This tradition persists today in the form of Kathina robes offerings, where laypeople offer robes and cloth to the monastic community. Challenges in Preservation of Bandhana Relics The discovery and preservation of ancient textiles such as bandhana cloths pose significant challenges due to their organic composition. Cloth fragments from ancient stupas are often fragile and prone to disintegration.

Early excavations, such as those led by Masson and Cunningham, lacked the conservation techniques available today, leading to the degradation of many textile relics.

The surviving fragments in institutions like the British Museum undergo meticulous conservation efforts to prevent further decay. Bandhana in Contemporary Buddhist Practice The concept of bandhana continues to hold relevance in modern Buddhist rituals and ceremonies.

During important religious events, symbolic cloths are used to wrap sacred texts, Buddha statues, and relics. Monks and laypeople often engage in rituals where they symbolically "bind" themselves to the precepts and teachings, signifying their spiritual commitment. The offering of robes during the Kathina festival can also be traced back to the symbolic tradition of bandhana.

Lay followers donate robes and other cloths, which are often ceremonially wrapped and presented to the Saṅgha as a gesture of respect and support. The discovery of ancient bandhana cloths in relic chambers, as documented in the British Museum's records, serves as a testament to the profound reverence that early Buddhists held for the Buddha and his teachings. These simple yet significant pieces of cloth embodied protection, preservation, and spiritual devotion.

They remind us of the meticulous care with which the sacred was handled and the enduring message of simplicity and mindfulness taught by the Buddha. In modern times, the symbolism of bandhana continues to inspire practitioners worldwide to "bind" themselves to the Dhamma and live lives of humility, restraint, and dedication to the path of liberation. Through these ancient remnants of cloth, we catch a glimpse of the spiritual fabric that bound early Buddhist communities together and preserved their connection to the Enlightened One.

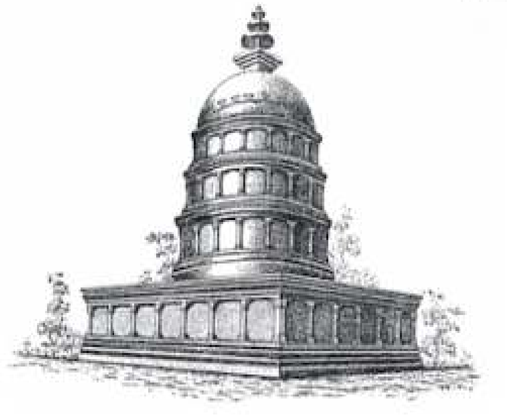
Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka)

Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer

Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

49.The Founder of Kahu-jo-daro Stupa's Venerable Ashin Mahinda (Relics), the Son of Emperor Ashoka

ကုဇောဒါရစေတီတော်ကြီး၏မူလဒါယကာ



ကုဇောဒါရစေတီတော်ကြီး ၏ မူလပုံတော်

The origins of the Kahu-jo-daro Stupa near Mirpurkhas in Sindh can be traced back to one of the most revered figures in Buddhist history: Mahinda, the son of Emperor Ashoka. As a devoted monk, Venerable Ashin Mahinda played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism beyond the Indian subcontinent, leaving a lasting spiritual legacy. The construction of the stupa at Kahu-jo-daro is believed to have been part of his broader mission to establish Buddhism in the frontier regions of Ashoka's vast empire, particularly in Sindh, which was a strategic and cultural gateway to Central Asia and the Middle East.

This essay explores the life of Mahinda, his missionary journey, and his role as the founder of the Kahu-jo-daro Stupa, a monument that stands as a testament to the enduring impact of his spiritual mission.

Ashin Mahinda The Devoted Son of Ashoka Mahinda was the eldest son of Emperor Ashoka, the great Mauryan ruler who became one of the most celebrated patrons of Buddhism. After witnessing the horrors of the Kalinga War, Ashoka embraced Buddhism and devoted his reign to spreading the Buddha's teachings of non-violence, compassion, and moral living. His son, Mahinda, inherited his father's spiritual calling and chose the path of renunciation, becoming a monk at a young age.

Ashin Mahinda's ordination symbolized the profound commitment of the Mauryan royal family to Buddhism. Alongside his sister Sanghamitta, who was also ordained as a nun, Mahinda embarked on a lifelong mission to disseminate the Dhamma. While Sanghamitta is famous for establishing the Bhikkhunī order and planting the sacred Bodhi tree sapling in Sri Lanka, Mahinda's journey took him to Sindh and beyond, where he established significant Buddhist monuments, including the stupa at Kahu-jo-daro.

Ashin Mahinda's Mission in Sindh The Sindh region, with its bustling trade routes and cultural exchanges, was a vital part of Ashoka's empire. It was an ideal location for spreading the Buddha's teachings to travelers, merchants, and monks moving between India, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Mahinda's presence in Sindh was not coincidental—Ashoka's vision for Buddhism was to make it a unifying spiritual force across diverse territories. Mahinda's mission in Sindh aimed to establish spiritual centers that would serve as sanctuaries for Buddhist monks and as places of pilgrimage for devotees.

The construction of the Kahu-jo-daro Stupa marked a significant milestone in this endeavor. Stupas were built to enshrine relics of the Buddha or commemorate significant events in his life. It is believed that the Kahu-jo-daro Stupa may have contained sacred relics, such as fragments of the Buddha's remains or symbolic offerings. Mahinda's decision to build the stupa at this location reflects the spiritual importance of Sindh as a bridge between East and West and as a frontier of Buddhist expansion.

Architectural and Spiritual Legacy The stupa at Kahu-jo-daro was designed in accordance with the traditional Buddhist architectural principles that Mahinda would have learned from the Buddhist centers in Pataliputra (modern-day Patna) and Vidisha. The structure likely included a hemispherical dome symbolizing the Buddha's enlightenment, a square platform at the top representing the throne of wisdom, and a central pillar signifying the axis mundi—the connection between the earthly and divine realms.

Ashin Mahinda's influence ensured that the stupa became more than just a monument; it became a center for meditation, study, and communal worship. The stupa attracted monks, scholars, and pilgrims, who played a key role in disseminating the teachings of the Buddha along the Silk Road. The artistic style of the Kahu-jo-daro Stupa also reflected the Mauryan tradition, with possible influences from the Greco-Buddhist art that would later flourish in Gandhara.

Ashin Mahinda's Vision and the Decline of Buddhism in Sindh
Mahinda's mission in Sindh laid the foundation for a thriving Buddhist culture that flourished for several centuries.

However, over time, historical upheavals, invasions, and the gradual spread of other religious traditions led to the decline of Buddhism in the region. The Kahu-jo-daro Stupa, once a symbol of spiritual resilience, fell into ruin and was eventually forgotten, buried under layers of history. Despite the passage of time, the rediscovery of the stupa and the efforts of scholars such as Sabyasachi Mukherjee have reignited interest in Mahinda's contributions to Sindh's Buddhist heritage.

The reconstruction of the site offers valuable insights into the life and legacy of a monk who was not only the son of a great emperor but also a spiritual pioneer who dedicated his life to the propagation of peace and wisdom. The Kahu-jo-daro Stupa stands as a lasting tribute to Mahinda's mission and Emperor Ashoka's vision of a world guided by the teachings of the Buddha. As the founder of this sacred site, Mahinda exemplified the virtues of humility, compassion, and unwavering dedication to the Dhamma.

The stupa's rediscovery serves as a reminder of Sindh's forgotten Buddhist past and of Mahinda's enduring legacy as a spiritual ambassador who bridged kingdoms and connected cultures through the universal message of enlightenment. By honoring Mahinda's contributions, we also reaffirm the timeless relevance of the values he espoused—values that continue to inspire generations in their quest for peace and understanding.

Bhikkhu Indaosma Srirdantamahapalaka

The Author , Research Scholar
Ph.D Candidate (Peace Studies) ,M.A(Pali)

50. The Monk's Last Breath: The Story of the Poison Tooth Relic (Venerable Ārāṇiyaka)

During the Buddha's lifetime, monks devoted themselves to meditation and solitude in forest retreats, living in harmony with nature. Among them was a monk known for his serene dedication and profound wisdom, Venerable Ārāṇiyaka, who spent his days in deep contemplation under the shade of a sacred tree. One fateful evening, as the monk sat absorbed in meditation, a venomous snake slithered near his resting place. In its natural instinct, the snake bit the monk's foot, injecting its deadly venom. Despite the intense pain, Venerable Ārāṇiyaka remained calm, reflecting on the impermanence of life and maintaining unshakable mindfulness.

"This body is but a vessel of the four elements, prone to decay and destruction. The venom is but another force of nature—neither friend nor foe." With this understanding, the monk did not harbor fear or anger but passed away peacefully, seated in meditation. A Remarkable Relic: The Blackened Tooth When the monk's body was cremated according to the monastic tradition, something extraordinary was discovered among the ashes—a single tooth relic.

However, unlike the pristine white relics often found after the passing of enlightened beings, this tooth was blackened. The Saṅgha, astonished by this unusual relic, came to understand that the dark color was a result of the snake's venom that had permeated the monk's body. Rather than being seen as a flaw, the blackened tooth relic was revered as a symbol of the monk's purity, resilience, and unwavering practice in the face of suffering. Preservation of the Black Tooth Relic The black tooth relic was enshrined and preserved with great reverence by the monastic community.

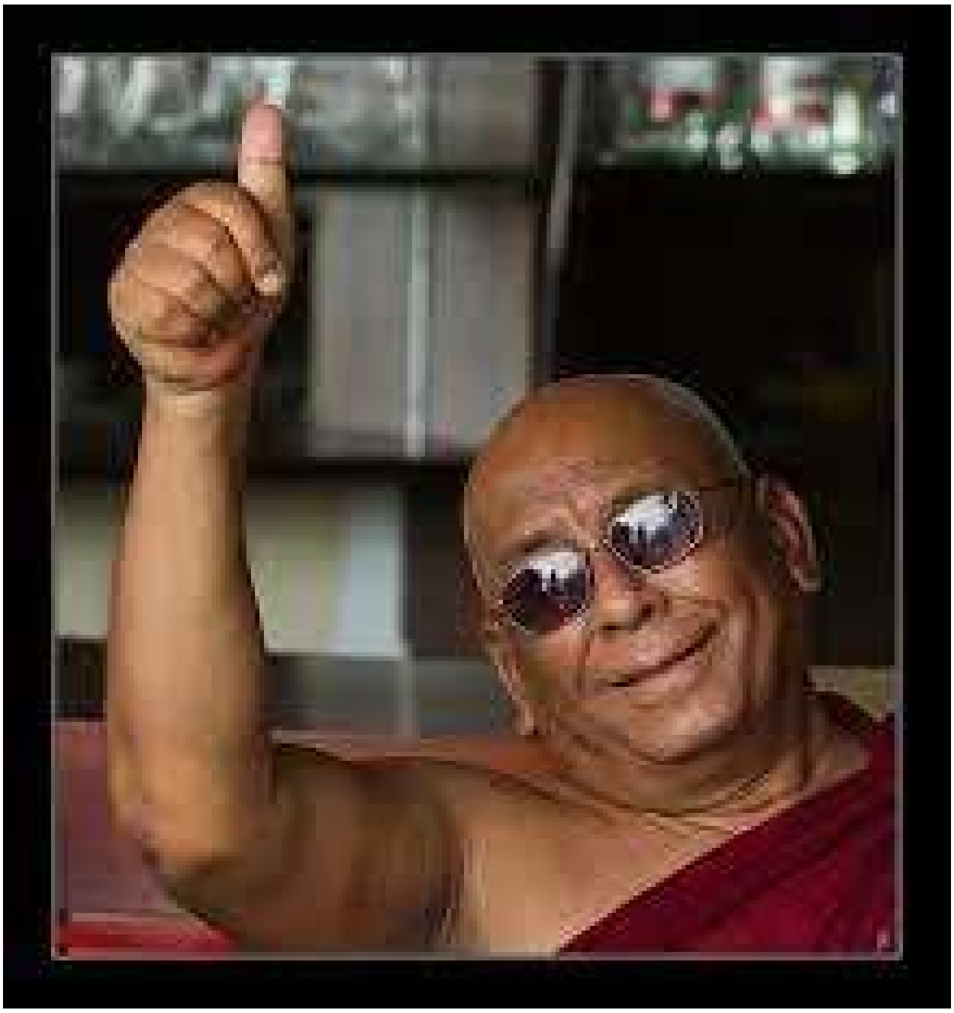
It served as a profound reminder of Venerable Ārāṇiyaka's strength of mind and the Buddha's teachings on loving-kindness and impermanence. Visitors who beheld the relic saw not only a physical remnant of the monk but also a testament to his compassion and fearlessness. The Buddha reminded the Saṅgha: "Even in the presence of death, the mind that is free from fear, hatred, and attachment shines brighter than any affliction. Therefore, cultivate loving-kindness for all beings, even those who cause harm.

With metta in the heart, even poison loses its sting.

" The Legacy of the Black Relic The black tooth relic of the monk stands as a unique and sacred symbol in Buddhist history, illustrating that even the destructive forces of nature cannot stain the purity of a truly enlightened heart. It became a cherished reminder of the power of mindfulness and the ultimate triumph of spiritual liberation over physical suffering. Through its preservation, the legacy of Venerable Ārāṇiyaka lives on, teaching that with metta (loving-kindness) and wisdom, one can transcend fear, suffering, and even death itself.

"In life or death, the wise remain unmoved, for they see beyond the veil of suffering." "Let loving-kindness conquer fear, for venom cannot stain a heart filled with compassion." "The body may perish, but the truth of Dhamma shines eternal." Bhikkhu Indaosma Srirdantamahapalaka The Author , Research Scholar Ph.D Candidate (Peace Studies) ,M.A(Pali) Founder of the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum

51. Research Questions for Dr. Ashin Nyanissara (Sitagu Sayadawgyi) Regarding the Preservation and Testing of Buddha Tooth Relics:



Sao Dhammasami (Researcher) emailed Dr. Ashin Nyanissara (Sitagu Sayadawgyi) about preserving and testing Buddha tooth relics, receiving a phone call in response.

1. **Research and Data Collection at the British Museum**

   Did Dr. Ashin Nyanissara visit the British Museum in England for the purpose of researching and collecting data related to the Buddha Tooth Relics? If so, what were the specific objectives and outcomes of his visit?

2. **Acquisition of Relics from Ancient Sites**

   Did Dr. Ashin Nyanissara bring Buddha Tooth Relics, along with bone relics, ashes, hair, and robes, from ancient stupas in regions such as Afghanistan and Pakistan (formerly part of India)? If so, how were these relics identified and authenticated before being preserved at Sitagu Sayadawgyi's temple?

3. **DNA and Carbon-14 Testing**

   Did Dr. Ashin Nyanissara arrange for DNA and Carbon-14 testing of the Buddha Tooth Relics in England? What was the purpose of conducting these tests, and which institutions were involved in the process?

4. **Unintended Damage During Testing**

   Was Dr. Ashin Nyanissara informed that DNA and Carbon-14 testing procedures might involve irreversible changes to the relics, such as reducing parts of them to powder? If so, what were his reactions to this, and how was the preservation of the relics addressed post-testing?

5. **Laboratory Fire Incident**

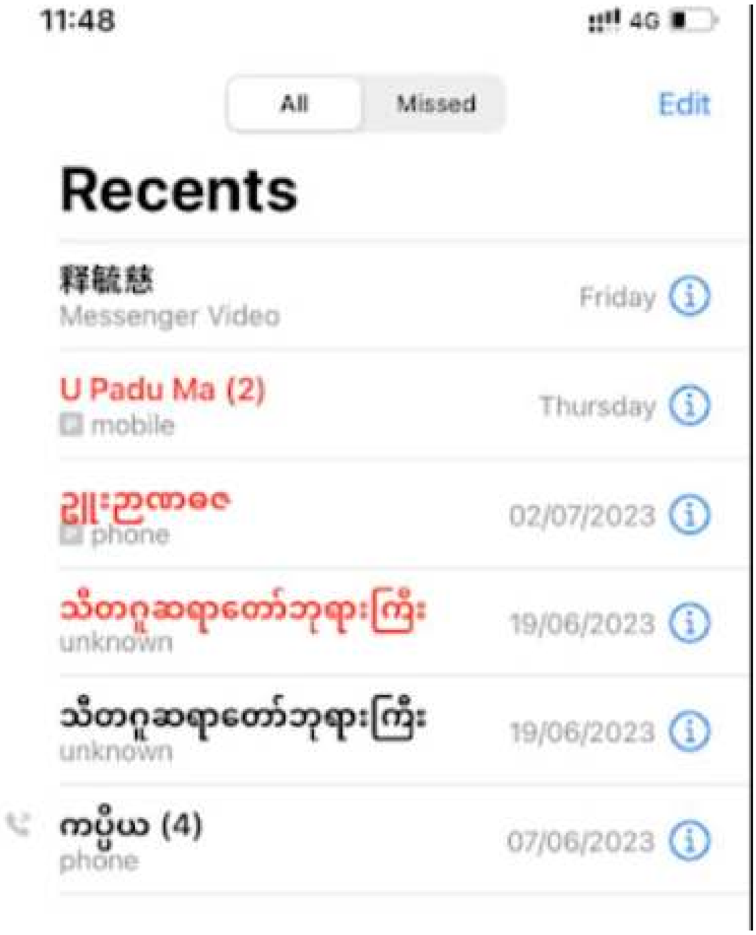
   Is it true that the laboratory where the DNA and Carbon-14 testing was conducted experienced a fire after the tests were completed? If so, what were the circumstances, and were any significant materials or findings lost in the incident?

Preservation of 28 Tooth Relics

Is it accurate that Dr. Ashin Nyanissara currently preserves a total of 28 tooth relics, which were allegedly collected from ancient sites in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other regions of old India? How are these relics being maintained, and what are the plans for their future preservation and research?

Bhikkhuindasoma (siridantamahapalaka)
Researcher ,Writer and Master Treainer
Ph.D(Candidate), M.A(Pali)

52. Debunking misinformation surrounding the Buddha Tooth Relics.



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Messenger Video — Friday

U Padu Ma (2)
mobile — Thursday

ဦးဉာဏဓဇ
phone — 02/07/2023

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unknown — 19/06/2023

သီတဂူဆရာတော်ဘုရားကြီး
unknown — 19/06/2023

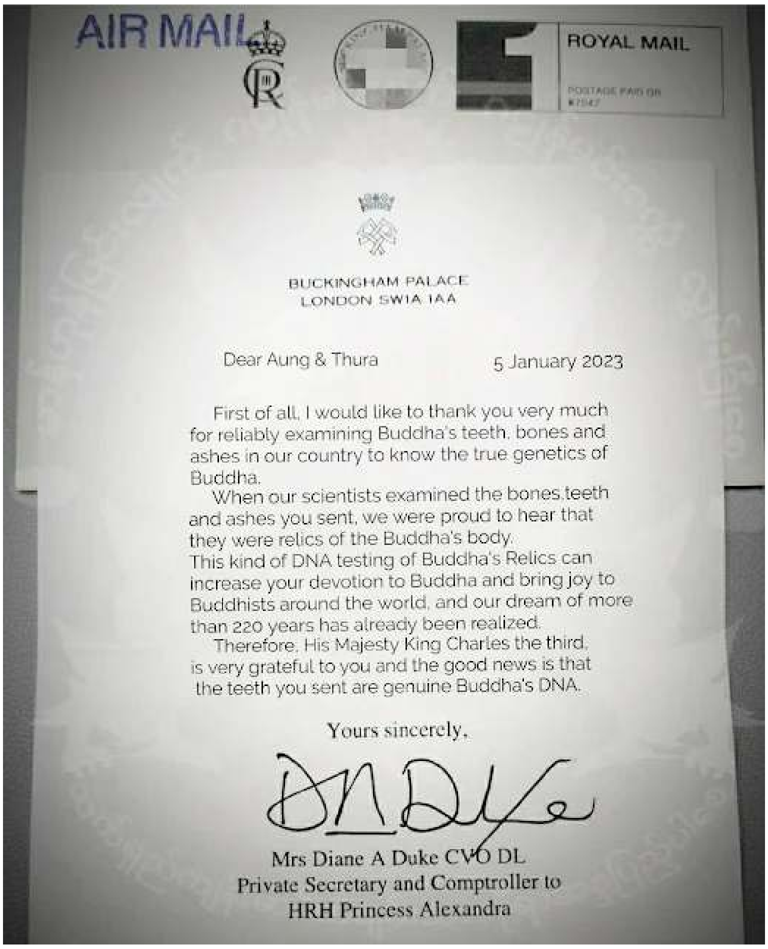
ကပ္ပိယ (4)
phone — 07/06/2023

Sao Dhammasami asking Research Question to Dr. Ashin Nyanissara (Sitagu Sayadawgyi)about alleged involvement in the preservation and DNA testing of Buddha Tooth Relics. On June 2, 2023, a formal letter was sent to him, followed by a phone call by Dr Ashin Nyanissara on June 19, 2023, during which Dr. Ashin Nyanissara clarified he had no role in collecting tooth relics or testing the relics for DNA and. Carbon14 testing, dispelling rumors.This clarification, supported by documentation, ensures an accurate understanding of Dr. Ashin Nyanissara's role, debunking misinformation surrounding the Buddha Tooth Relics.

53. The King and Princess's office, confirmed by Thura Kyaw, called the letters "forgeries."

Introduction

In response to recent allegations from the chief spokesperson at Buckingham Palace, AP News Agency reporter Deepa reached out regarding the authenticity of letters allegedly from King Charles and Princess Alexandra's office. The letters, which purportedly confirmed the authentication of Buddha tooth relics through DNA and Carbon-14 testing, have been identified as "forgeries." Furthermore, it has been clarified that King Charles did not commission any such examination.



AIR MAIL

[redacted]

ROYAL MAIL

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
LONDON SW1A 1AA

Dear Aung & Thura 5 January 2023

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for reliably examining Buddha's teeth, bones and ashes in our country to know the true genetics of Buddha.

When our scientists examined the bones,teeth and ashes you sent, we were proud to hear that they were relics of the Buddha's body.
This kind of DNA testing of Buddha's Relics can increase your devotion to Buddha and bring joy to Buddhists around the world, and our dream of more than 220 years has already been realized.

Therefore, His Majesty King Charles the third, is very grateful to you and the good news is that the teeth you sent are genuine Buddha's DNA.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Diane A Duke CVO DL
Private Secretary and Comptroller to
HRH Princess Alexandra

To address these claims, I conducted an interview with Mr. Thura Kyaw, a former senior member of HGT. Mr. Kyaw had been involved in providing the DNA and Carbon-14 testing data related to the relics. Given the controversy, Mr. Kyaw's insights are critical in understanding the origin of the letters and the associated relics. Below is the interview transcript, shedding light on his role and perspective regarding these events.

Interview with Mr. Thura Kyaw

Q1: When did you conduct the DNA and Carbon-14 testing?
Answer: In June or July of 2022, I conducted the DNA testing.

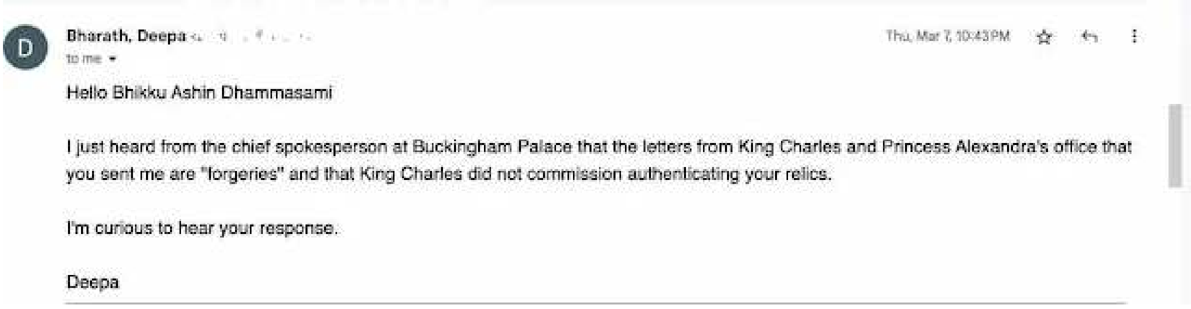
Q2: When did you receive the DNA test results?
Answer: In October 2022, I received the confirmation of the DNA test results.

Q3: How many Buddha tooth relics were donated to Naga Cave?
Answer: One Buddha tooth relic was donated to Naga Cave by me.

Q4: How many tooth relics did you send to England, and what other relics were included?
Answer: I sent five tooth relics, along with hair, bone fragments, ashes, and other relics, to a trusted individual who would deliver them to England.

Q5: When did you receive the report on the DNA and Carbon-14 testing results?
Answer: I received the report on the DNA and Carbon-14 testing results in October 2022.

Q6: Did you receive any written report or documentation?
Answer: The individual provided me with an oral description and explanation of the report.



Bharath, Deepa [redacted]
to me
Thu, Mar 7, 10:43 PM

Hello Bhikku Ashin Dhammasami

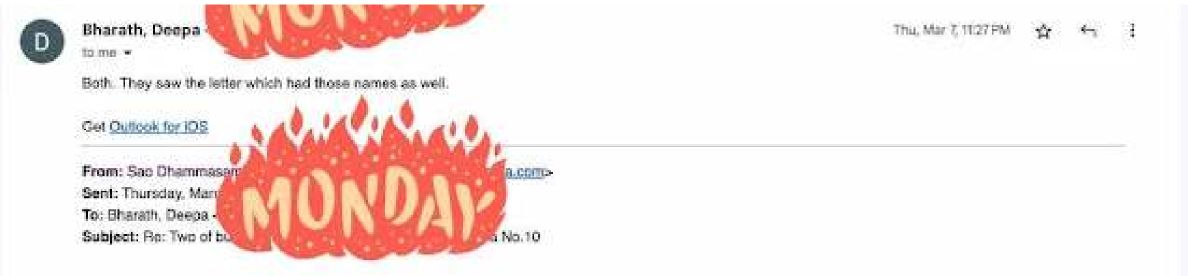
I just heard from the chief spokesperson at Buckingham Palace that the letters from King Charles and Princess Alexandra's office that you sent me are "forgeries" and that King Charles did not commission authenticating your relics.

I'm curious to hear your response.

Deepa

Q7: I just heard from AP News Agency reporter Deepa reached out **the chief spokesperson at Buckingham Palace that the letters addressed to Mr. Aung Bhone Pyae and yourself, reportedly from King Charles and Princess Alexandra's office, have been identified as "forgeries." What is your response?**

Answer: Mr. Pyae Toe Aung, also known as Aung Bhone Pyae, once told me that he intended to create forged letters. In response, I advised him against it, emphasizing that in this digital age, such actions could easily be discovered through the internet. This was his reaction to my advice.



Bharath, Deepa [redacted]
to me
Thu, Mar 7, 11:27 PM

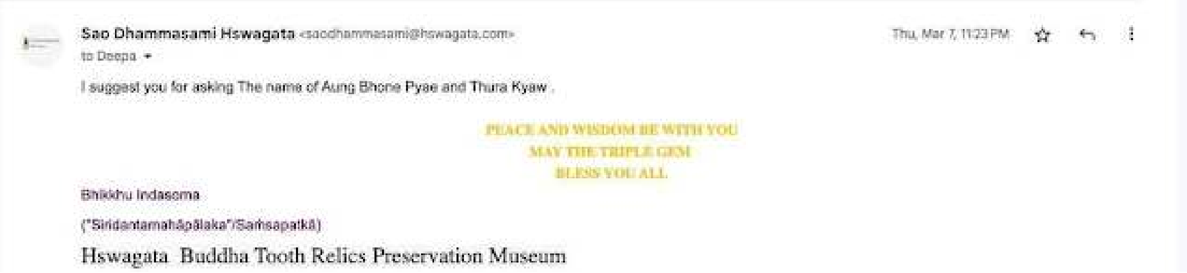
Both. They saw the letter which had those names as well.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Sao Dhammasam[redacted]a.com>
Sent: Thursday, Mar[redacted]
To: Bharath, Deepa [redacted]
Subject: Re: Two of bu[redacted] No.10

Q8: It has also been clarified that King Charles did not commission the authentication of your relics. What is your response to this?

Answer: When the individual family requested relics from me, they informed me that they intended to conduct a scientific examination. They asked for my permission, which I granted. However, I did not directly contact or travel to England myself.



Sao Dhammasami Hswagata <saodhammasami@hswagata.com>
to Deepa
Thu, Mar 7, 11:23 PM

I suggest you for asking The name of Aung Bhone Pyae and Thura Kyaw .

PEACE AND WISDOM BE WITH YOU
MAY THE TRIPLE GEM
BLESS YOU ALL

Bhikkhu Indasoma
("Siridantamahāpālaka"/Saṁsapatkā)
Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum

Q9: Did you file any official objection regarding the two letters from Buckingham Palace, which were addressed to Mr. Aung Bhone Pyae and included your name as Mr. Thura Kyaw?
Answer: No, I did not file an official objection because I believed he was keeping the letters privately. However, unfortunately, he made a public announcement about them.

Q10: Even after seeing the interview on social media where Mr. Pyae Toe Aung was holding the two forged letters, which also mentioned your name, why did you not make any argument or objection?

Answer: I did not make any objection because the letters were not created by me. They were fabricated by Mr. Pyae Toe Aung, and he is the one responsible for them.

Q11: This entire interview is intended for use in research, a thesis, articles, or public information. Do you grant permission for it to be shared publicly?
Answer: Yes, I explicitly agree to allow the interview to be shared publicly.

54 DNA and Carbon Dating in Relic Authentication: Modern Tools, Ancient Truths

Send a formal request to

saodhammasami@hswagata.com

to view the confidential DNA and carbon dating report on the relics.

55. What's the cause, what's the reason of doubt and being busy to seek the Gems in Bones?

The Buddha's decision to leave relics (dhatu) after his parinibbana had several important purposes:

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The Significance of Buddhist Relics and Sacred Sites

1. As Objects of Devotion and Remembrance:

The Buddha recognized that physical reminders would help practitioners maintain their faith and practice. In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta (DN 16), the Buddha designated four places worthy of pilgrimage (cattāri saṃvejanīyaṭṭhānāni):

"These four places, Ananda, should be seen by the faithful... Which four?

- Lumbini, where the Tathagata was born
- Bodhgaya, where he attained supreme enlightenment
- Sarnath, where he first turned the wheel of Dhamma
- Kushinagar, where he attained parinibbana"

2. For Spiritual Development:

The relics serve as aids for contemplation and developing mindfulness of the Buddha (buddhānussati). As taught in AN 6.10, recollection of the Buddha leads to joy (pāmojja) and tranquility (passaddhi), supporting deeper practice.

The Dhammapada emphasizes the proper approach to veneration:

"Better than a thousand meaningless verses is one meaningful verse, hearing which brings peace." (Dhp 101)

3. Unity of the Sangha:

The distribution of relics after the Buddha's parinibbana, as recorded in DN 16, promoted harmony and helped spread the Dhamma. This historical event demonstrates the skillful means (upāya) used to prevent conflict and establish Buddhism across different regions.

4. Teaching Impermanence:

The relics powerfully illustrate the Buddha's teaching on impermanence (anicca). In SN 22.87 (Vakkali Sutta), the Buddha states:

"Enough, Vakkali! What is there to see in this foul body? One who sees Dhamma sees me; one who sees me sees Dhamma."

Important Considerations Regarding Relic Veneration:

1. Avoiding Attachment:

The Buddha cautioned against attachment to physical forms. In MN 22 (Alagaddūpama Sutta), he teaches:

"You should abandon even dhamma, let alone what is not dhamma."

2. True Refuge:

The three genuine refuges (tisaraṇa) are:
- Buddha - The enlightened mind
- Dhamma - The truth and teachings
- Sangha - The noble community

As taught in Dhp 188-192, true refuge lies in the Triple Gem, not in external objects.

3. Proper Practice:

The authentic relics are the living practice of:
- Sīla (moral conduct)
- Samādhi (concentration)
- Paññā (wisdom)

This is reinforced in AN 3.70 (Uposatha Sutta) about the noble ones' heritage.

4. Skillful Contemplation:

When visiting relics or sacred sites, one should reflect:
- On impermanence (anicca)
- On the Buddha's virtues
- On applying the teachings in daily life

The Dhammapada beautifully summarizes this approach:

"Better than a hundred years lived without seeing the supreme truth is one day lived seeing it." (Dhp 115)

Additional Guidance:

For those seeking to deepen their practice through relic veneration, the Buddha taught in AN 4.170 that proper devotional practices should be accompanied by:
1. Unwavering confidence in the Buddha
2. Unwavering confidence in the Dhamma
3. Unwavering confidence in the Sangha
4. Noble virtues dear to the ariyas

Proper Approach to Relic Veneration

1. Developing Right Motivation:

The Buddha emphasized the importance of proper motivation in AN 1.287:

"Monks, just as the dawn is the forerunner of the sunrise, so is right view the forerunner of wholesome states."

When approaching relics, one should:

- Avoid seeking magical powers (iddhi)
- Move beyond mechanical merit-making (puñña)
- Strengthen commitment to practice (paṭipatti)
- Use them as inspiration for the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga)

As taught in Dhp 276:

"You yourselves must strive; the Buddhas only point the way."

2. Contemplation Guidelines:

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10) provides a framework for mindful reflection:

- Examine one's sīla (moral conduct)
- Consider practical application of Dhamma
- Maintain present-moment awareness
- Cultivate wisdom (paññā)

3. True Veneration:

In DN 16 (Mahāparinibbāna Sutta), the Buddha states:

"Therefore, Ananda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge."

This teaching is reinforced in AN 4.21:

"**One honors the Tathāgata by practicing Dhamma in accordance with Dhamma."**

4. Practical Application:

The Buddha taught in SN 47.9 (Gilāna Sutta) that mindfulness should be our true refuge:

- Maintain mindfulness of body (kāyānupassanā)
- Observe feelings (vedanānupassanā)
- Watch the mind (cittānupassanā)
- Examine mental qualities (dhammānupassanā)

5. Essential Reminder:

As emphasized in Dhp 364:

"The gift of Dhamma excels all gifts;
The taste of Dhamma excels all tastes;
The joy of Dhamma excels all joys;
The destruction of craving overcomes all suffering."

Practical Guidelines for Relic Visitation:

1. Before visiting:

- Establish pure intention (cetanā)
- Reflect on the Buddha's qualities
- Prepare mind for contemplation

2. During the visit:

- Maintain mindfulness (sati)
- Practice loving-kindness (mettā)
- Reflect on impermanence (anicca)

3. After visiting:

- Apply insights to daily practice
- Share merits with all beings
- Renew commitment to the path

As the Buddha taught in AN 3.70:

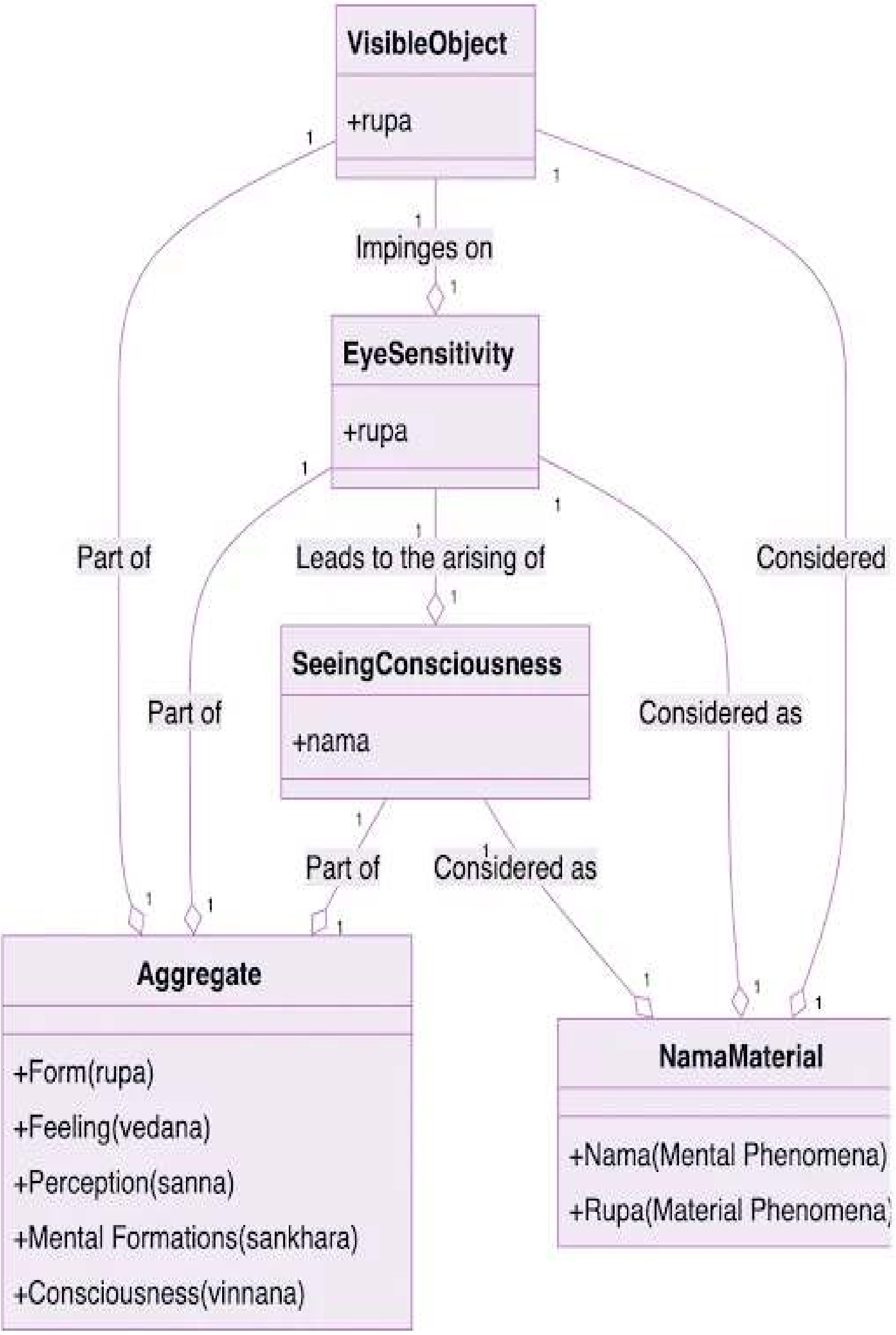
"These three things lead to the uplift of the wise: noble conduct, noble concentration, noble wisdom."

The essence is captured in the Buddha's words from DN 16:

"Whoever, Ananda, practices the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, that one honors, reveres, and serves the Tathagata with the highest homage."

This approach aligns with the Buddha's emphasis on practical application rather than mere devotional acts. As stated in Dhp 183:

"To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one's mind — this is the teaching of the Buddhas."


VisibleObject
+rupa
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EyeSensitivity
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Aggregate
+Form(rupa)
+Feeling(vedana)
+Perception(sanna)
+Mental Formations(sankhara)
+Consciousness(vinnana)
NamaMaterial
+Nama(Mental Phenomena)
+Rupa(Material Phenomena)
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The Process (Vithi):

As explained in the Abhidhamma and commented on in the Visuddhimagga:

1. Cakkhu-pasada (eye-sensitivity) meets visible object
2. This contact triggers cakkhu-vinnana (eye-consciousness)
3. Along with cakkhu-vinnana, three other mental factors arise:

- Vedana (feeling)
- Sanna (perception)
- Cetana (volition)

The Five Aggregates (Panca Khandha) in this process:

As taught in SN 22.56:

1. Rupakkhandha (Material aggregate):

- Eye-sensitivity
- Visible object

2-5. Namakkhandha (Mental aggregates):

According to AN 3.61:

- Vinnana (consciousness)
- Vedana (feeling)
- Sanna (perception)
- Sankhara (represented here by cetana)

This process illustrates important Buddhist principles:

- Dependent Origination (Paticca-samuppada)
- Non-self nature (Anatta)
- Momentariness of consciousness

In AN3.61, the Buddha explains that consciousness arises dependent on conditions, comparing it to a fire that is named according to its fuel. Similarly, eye-consciousness arises dependent on eye-sensitivity and visible objects.

The Process Components:

1. Citta (Consciousness):
- The basic awareness of the visible object
- The "knowing" element

2. Cetasika (Mental States/Factors):

- Vedana: feeling/sensation
- Sañña: perception/recognition
- Cetana: volition/intention

3. Rupa (Material Elements):

- Eye-sensitivity (cakkhu-pasada)
- Visible object

This illustrates the fundamental teaching that every moment of experience consists of:

- The knowing consciousness (citta)
- Its accompanying mental factors (cetasika)
- Physical base and object (rupa)

This analysis is crucial for:

- Understanding the non-self nature (anatta)
- Seeing dependent origination (paticca-samuppada)
- Developing insight meditation (vipassana)

As stated in the Abhidhamma, citta never arises alone but always with cetasikas. This shows the interdependent nature of mental phenomena.

In the Seeing Process:

1. Rupa (Material Phenomena):
- Eye-sensitivity (physical sense base)
- Visible object

2. Nama (Mental Phenomena):

- The consciousness that knows/is aware of the visible object

This nama-rupa analysis is crucial because:
- It's simpler than the detailed citta-cetasika-rupa analysis
- It's more practical for beginning vipassana practice
- It helps break down the illusion of a solid "self"

As the Buddha taught in MN28:

"Just as when two sheaves of reeds are standing leaning against each other, so too, with nama-rupa as condition, consciousness comes to be; with consciousness as condition, nama-rupa comes to be."

In Meditation Practice:

1. First note the basic distinction:
- Physical elements (rupa)
- Knowing/experiencing element (nama)

2. Observe how:
- They arise together
- They depend on each other
- Neither exists independently

Practical Application in Meditation:

1. Mindfulness of Seeing Process:
- When practicing, note the moment of seeing
- Observe how consciousness arises with feeling, perception, and volition
- Notice these are separate phenomena, not a "self" that sees

2. Development of Insight:

- Start recognizing the difference between:
  * The physical base (eye and object)
  * The mental experience (consciousness and mental factors)
- See how they work together yet are distinct

3. Breaking Down the Illusion of Self:

As stated in SN22.59 (Anatta-lakkhana Sutta):

"Form, feeling, perception, formations, consciousness are not-self. If they were self, they would not lead to affliction."

Practical Steps:

1. Begin with simple awareness of seeing
2. Notice the feeling tone (vedana) that arises
3. Observe how perception (saññа) labels the object
4. Watch how volition (cetana) responds
5. See how all these factors arise and pass away

This understanding leads to:

- Direct knowledge of impermanence (anicca)
- Understanding of unsatisfactoriness (dukkha)
- Realization of non-self (anatta)

Practical Meditation Guidelines:

1. Initial Observation:

Following MN 10 (Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta):
- Note physical base (rūpa)
- Observe mental experience (nāma)
- Watch their interaction

2. Deeper Investigation:

As taught in SN 35.28 (Āditta Sutta):
- Notice how eye and forms are "burning"
- See how consciousness arises dependently
- Observe the impermanent nature

3. Development of Insight:

Following AN 4.41:
- Develop direct knowledge (abhiññā)
- Cultivate full understanding (pariññā)
- Realize complete abandonment (pahāna)

The Buddha's teaching in SN 35.93 emphasizes:

"In the seen, there will be merely the seen;
In the heard, merely the heard;
In the sensed, merely the sensed;
In the cognized, merely the cognized."

This systematic analysis supports:

1. AN 1.287 (Titthāyatana Sutta):

"Monks, just as the dawn is the forerunner of the sunrise, so is right view the forerunner of wholesome states."

2. AN 3.61:

Teaches how consciousness is named according to conditions, like a fire named by its fuel.

3. MN 28 (Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta):

Contains the simile of the two sheaves of reeds explaining nama-rupa and consciousness interdependence.

4. SN 22.59 (Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta):

"Form, feeling, perception, formations, consciousness are not-self. If they were self, they would not lead to affliction."

Key Suttas:

1. AN 4.45 (Rohitassa Sutta)

- A shorter sutta (2,872 characters)

- Deals with the famous dialogue between Buddha and Rohitassa about traveling to the end of the world

2. SN 22.87 (Vakkali Sutta)
- Medium length (9,721 characters)
- Contains the famous teaching to Vakkali: "One who sees the Dhamma sees me; one who sees me sees the Dhamma"

3. MN 22 (Alagaddūpama Sutta)
- Longer text (31,602 characters)
- The Snake Simile Sutta, teaching about proper grasp of the Dhamma

Additional Referenced Teachings:

4. AN 3.42 (Tiṭhāna Sutta)
- Guidance on proper mental attitudes

5. SN 55.21-22 (Mahānāma Suttas)
- Instructions on faith and practice for lay followers

6. MN 77 (Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta)
- Teachings on proper veneration

7. Dhp 364-365:
"The Dhamma protects one who lives by the Dhamma"
"Not by another is one protected"

56. Joint Press Release : Nirvana Temple and Hswagata Forge Collaborative Partnership to Promote Buddhist Values and Community Welfare

Nirvana Temple and Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum Myanmar Forge Collaborative Partnership to Promote Buddhist Values and Community Welfare

[Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Yangon, Myanmar - March 1, 2024] - Nirvana Temple, represented by Bante Pannabodhi, and Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Myanmar, represented by Bhikkhu Indasoma, have officially entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize their collaborative efforts in promoting Buddhist principles, education, and community welfare.

The agreement, signed on February 28th, 2024, signifies a shared commitment between the two esteemed organizations to collaborate in various areas, including educational training, social service cooperation, Buddha Sasana development, youth empowerment, peace promotion activities, environmental conservation, mindfulness meditation programs, vocational training, counseling services, Dhamma talks, research and development, and programs catering to individuals with disabilities, mental illnesses, the elderly, and women empowerment.

Under the terms of the MOU, Nirvana Temple has generously agreed to provide land for the construction of the Myanmar Society Temple and the establishment of a branch office of Hswagata in Congo, fostering deeper ties between the two entities.

Additionally, Nirvana Temple acknowledges and embraces the 15 principles formulated by Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, which will guide their collaborative efforts throughout the duration of the agreement.

The MOU, set to commence upon signing and remain in effect for three years, underscores the mutual commitment of both organizations to work together towards common goals while upholding the principles of mutual support, cooperation, and respect.

In the event of any dispute, both parties have pledged to resolve issues amicably through consultation and negotiation, in adherence to the laws of Myanmar governing jurisdiction.

Both Bante Pannabodhi and Bhikkhu Indasoma, as duly authorized representatives of their respective organizations, expressed optimism and enthusiasm about the partnership, emphasizing its potential to positively impact communities and promote the teachings of Buddhism on a global scale.

For media inquiries and further information, please contact:

Nirvana Temple:

Bante Pannabodhi

pannabodhi@gmail.com

+243 840542771 / +243997106098

Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Myanmar:

Bhikkhu Indasoma

indasoma@hswagata.com

+95 9 79 888 4129

Joint Press Release

Nirvana Temple and Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum Myanmar Forge Collaborative Partnership to Promote Buddhist Values and Community Welfare [Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Yangon, Myanmar - March 1, 2024] - Nirvana Temple, represented by Bante Pannabodhi, and Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Myanmar, represented by Bhikkhu Indasoma, have officially entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize their collaborative efforts in promoting Buddhist principles, education, and community welfare. The agreement, signed on February 28th, 2024, signifies a shared commitment between the two esteemed organizations to collaborate in various areas, including educational training, social service cooperation, Buddha Sasana development, youth empowerment, peace promotion activities, environmental conservation, mindfulness meditation programs, vocational training, counseling services, Dhamma talks, research and development.

57. Joint Press Release Statement

For Immediate Release Date: March 1, 2024

We are delighted to announce the formalization of a collaborative partnership between the Khettarama Social Service Foundation and the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Myanmar, marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU, signed on March 1, 2024, signifies a significant milestone in our shared commitment to promoting Buddhist principles, fostering education, and serving communities around the world.

Key highlights of the MOU include:

- Collaborative Endeavors: The agreement outlines our joint efforts in educational training, social service cooperation, Buddha Sasana development, and various other initiatives aimed at uplifting communities and spreading the message of compassion and understanding.

- Land Provision and Temple Establishment: The Khettarama Social Service Foundation has graciously offered portions of land for the construction of the Myanmar Society Temple and the establishment of a branch office of Hswagata in Sri Lanka, symbolizing our commitment to physical spaces that foster spiritual growth and community engagement.

- Adherence to Guiding Principles: The Khettarama Social Service Foundation pledges to adhere to the 15 principles formulated by Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Myanmar. These principles serve as guiding values for our collaborative efforts and underscore our shared dedication to ethical conduct and humanitarian service.

This partnership represents a convergence of shared values and aspirations, underpinned by a deep reverence for Buddhist teachings and a profound commitment to the well-being of all sentient beings.

As we embark on this journey together, we envision a future filled with opportunities for mutual learning, growth, and collective impact. Through our combined efforts, we aspire to nurture a world characterized by compassion, wisdom, and harmony.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported us on this transformative journey, and we look forward to the meaningful collaborations that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Khettarama Social Service Foundation and Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum, Myanmar

58. Additional Reference Book

-Dīgha Nikāya (DN 16)

- Mahāparinibbāna Sutta Buddhaghosa

- Sumangalavilāsinī (Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya) Bhikkhu Bodhi

- "The Buddha's Teachings on Mindfulness and Liberation" Ajahn Brahm

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59. Thank You Note

I am profoundly grateful to the countless individuals and organizations who supported the creation of this book. Special thanks to the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum for preserving the sacred relics and providing invaluable resources for my research. I extend heartfelt appreciation to my mentors and the Sangha community for their guidance and encouragement. Lastly, I am indebted to my readers, whose interest and devotion to the Dhamma fuel the purpose of this work. May this book serve as a beacon of inspiration for all.

60. About Author

Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahāpālaka is a dedicated custodian of Buddhist sacred relics and a renowned author with over 30 published works. He is the founder of the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum and a committed scholar of Gandharan Buddhism. With a deep understanding of the Buddha's teachings, he has worked tirelessly to promote the preservation and reverence of sacred relics. His expertise spans Buddhist history, art, and cultural heritage, making his contributions invaluable to the global Buddhist community.

61. Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the steadfast support of numerous individuals and institutions. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to:

The Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Museum for their unparalleled dedication to preserving the Buddha's sacred relics and providing invaluable resources for this work.

My mentor, Venerable Ashin Indaka, whose wisdom and teachings have profoundly shaped my understanding of the Dhamma.

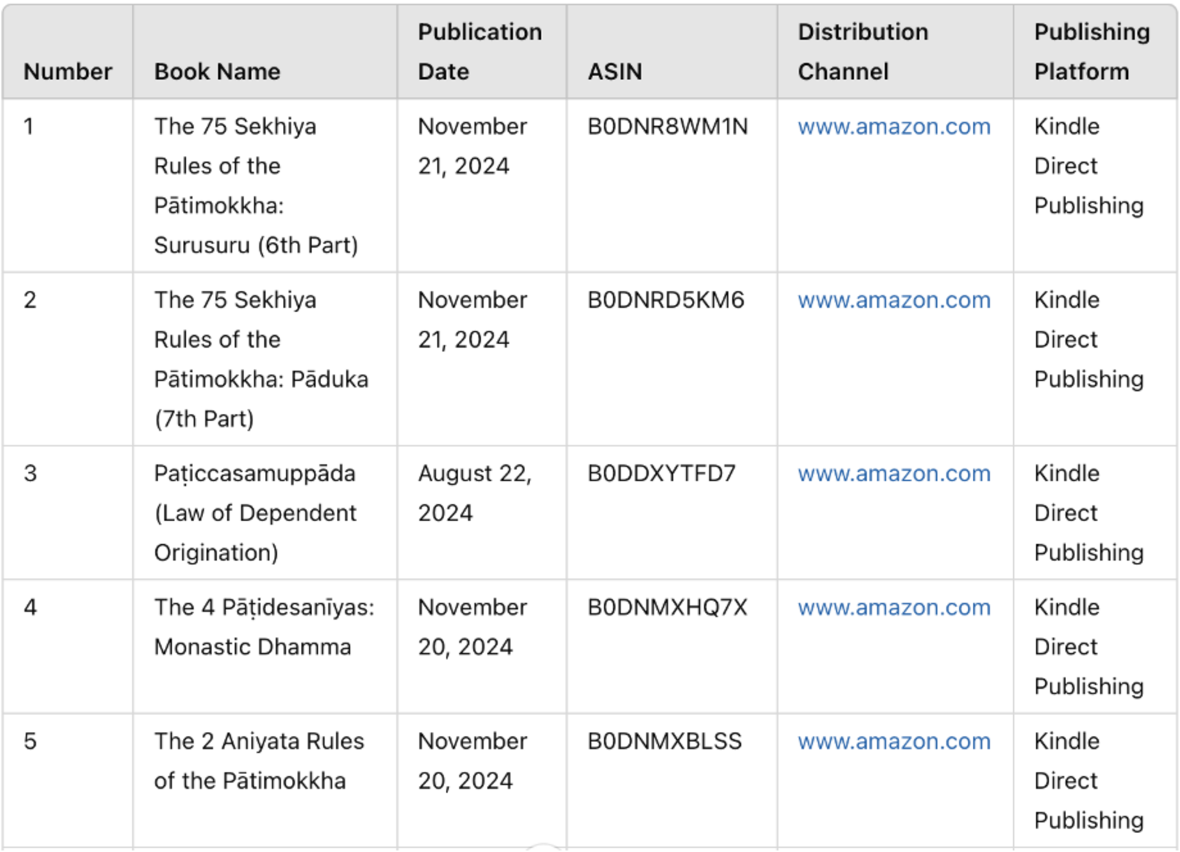
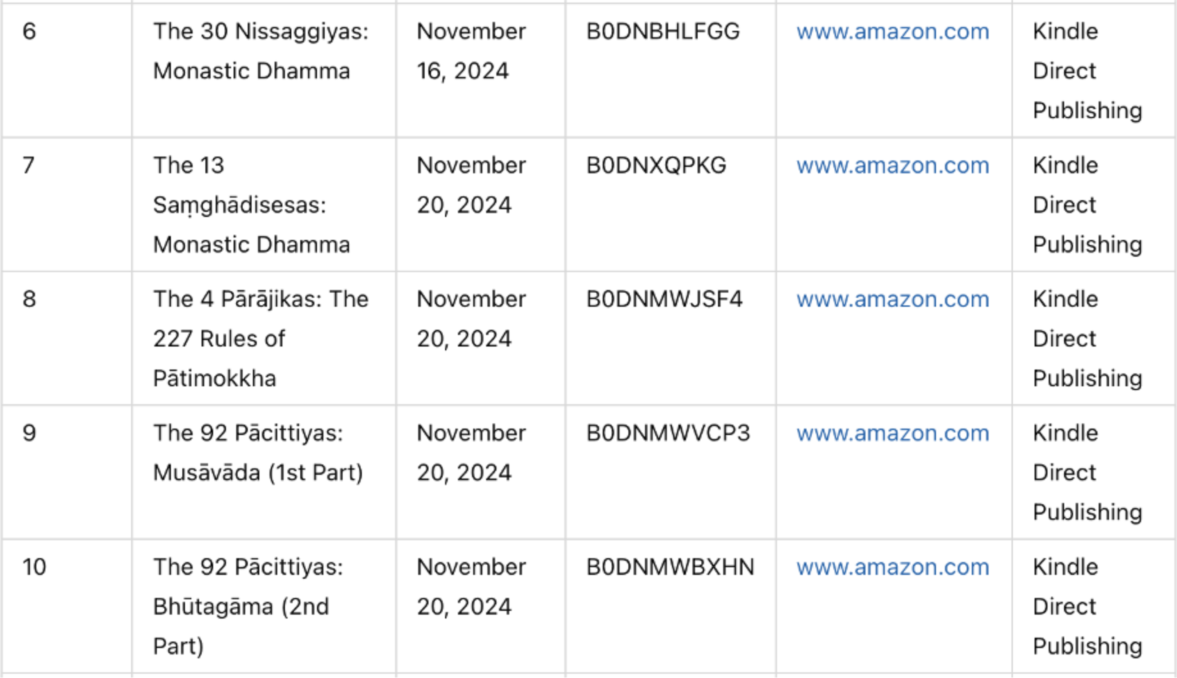
Most. Ven. Bamaw Sayardawgyi, Most. Ven. Prof. Dr.Ashin Nyanissara and The Oxford Sayadaw Prof. Dr. K. Dhammasami, and the countless researchers, historians, and archaeologists whose contributions have enriched this narrative.

The generous donors who provided financial support for the DNA and Carbon-14 Dating research, enabling the preservation and authentication of the Buddha's sacred relics.

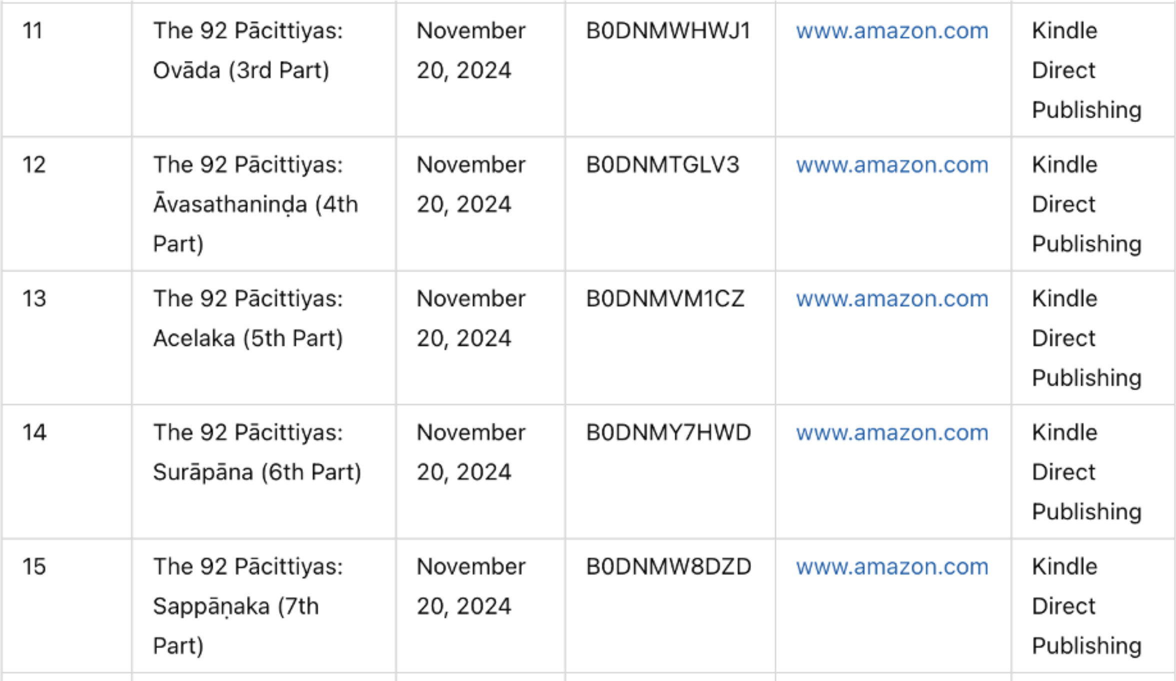
The Khettarama Social Service Foundation from Sri Lanka, Makutarama Temple, and CEYLON JOURNEY TAI SANGHA Organization.

The global Buddhist community, whose unwavering faith and devotion continue to honor and preserve the Buddha's teachings. To each of you, my deepest gratitude. May this book stand as a testament to your invaluable contributions and serve as a source of inspiration for generations to come.

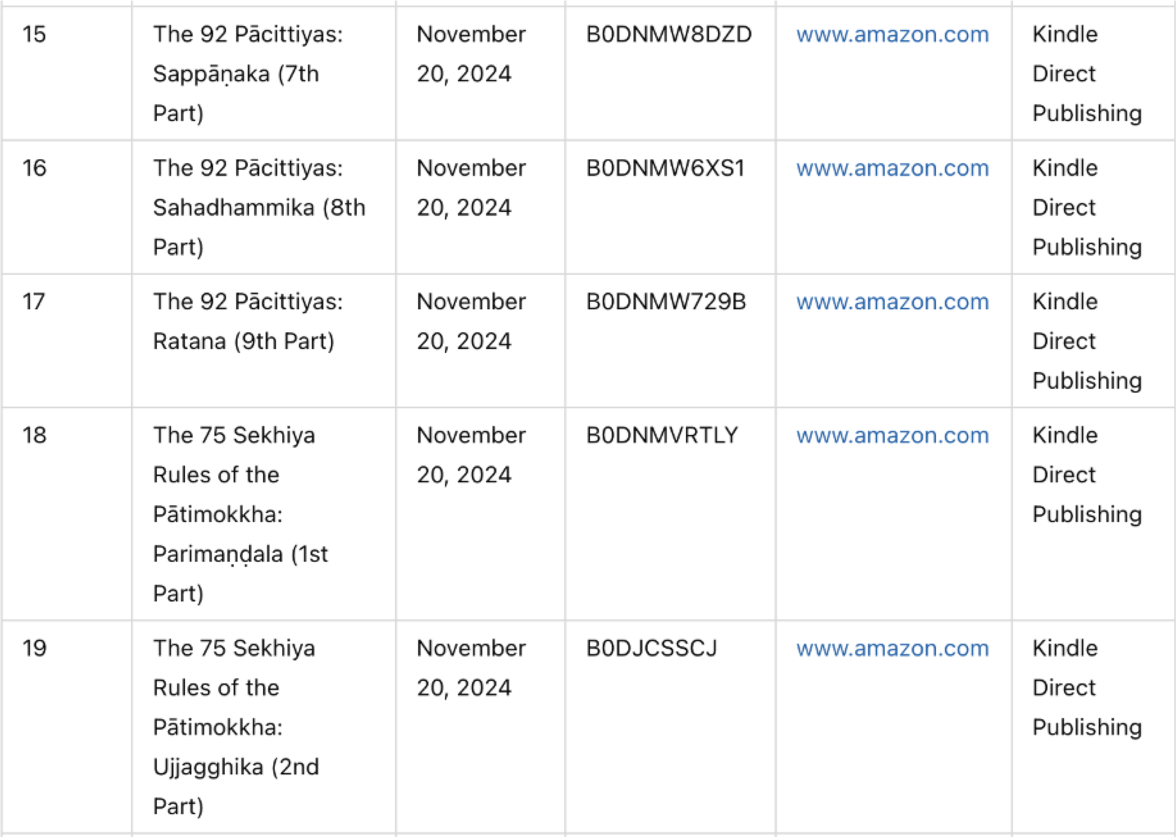
62. Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahaapālaka's published book.

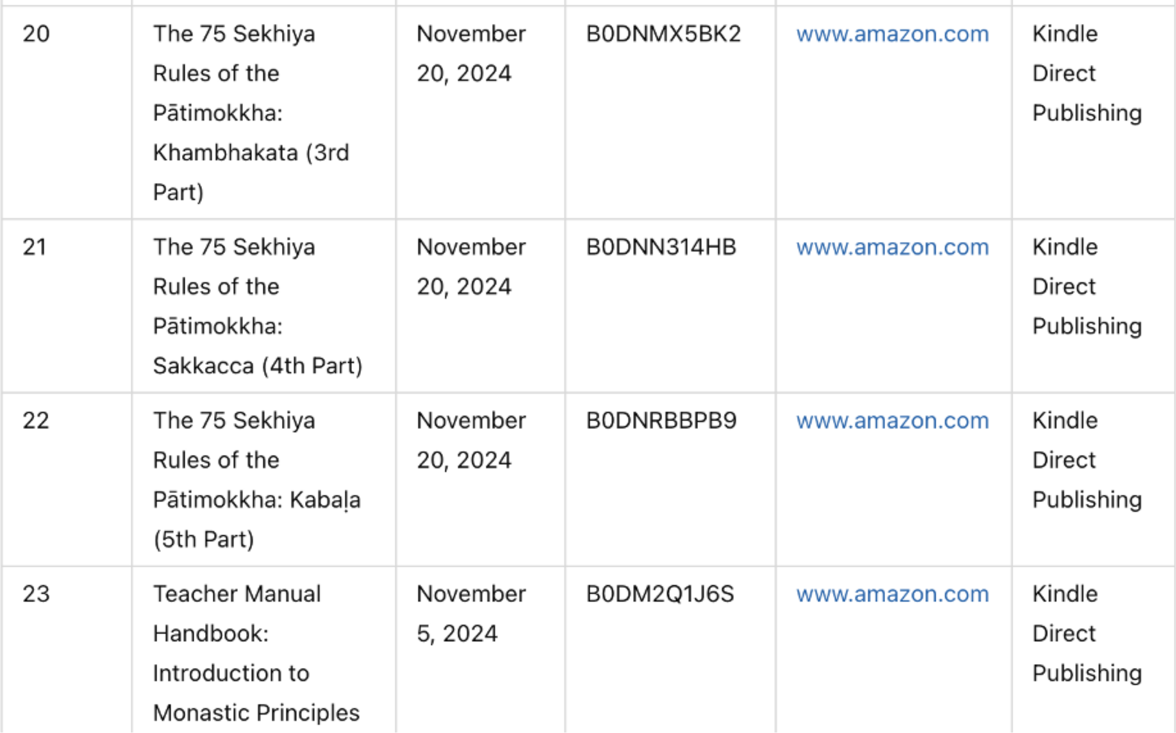
Number	Book Name	Publication Date	ASIN	Distribution Channel	Publishing Platform
1	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Surusuru (6th Part)	November 21, 2024	B0DNR8WM1N	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
2	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Pāduka (7th Part)	November 21, 2024	B0DNRD5KM6	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
3	Paṭiccasamuppāda (Law of Dependent Origination)	August 22, 2024	B0DDXYTFD7	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
4	The 4 Pāṭidesanīyas: Monastic Dhamma	November 20, 2024	B0DNMXHQ7X	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
5	The 2 Aniyata Rules of the Pātimokkha	November 20, 2024	B0DNMXBLSS	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
6	The 30 Nissaggiyas: Monastic Dhamma	November 16, 2024	B0DNBHLFGG	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
7	The 13 Saṃghādisesas: Monastic Dhamma	November 20, 2024	B0DNXQPKG	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
8	The 4 Pārājikas: The 227 Rules of Pātimokkha	November 20, 2024	B0DNMWJSF4	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
9	The 92 Pācittiyas: Musāvāda (1st Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMWVCP3	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
10	The 92 Pācittiyas: Bhūtagāma (2nd Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMWBXHN	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing



11	The 92 Pācittiyas: Ovāda (3rd Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMWHWJ1	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
12	The 92 Pācittiyas: Āvasathaninḍa (4th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMTGLV3	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
13	The 92 Pācittiyas: Acelaka (5th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMVM1CZ	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
14	The 92 Pācittiyas: Surāpāna (6th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMY7HWD	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
15	The 92 Pācittiyas: Sappāṇaka (7th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMW8DZD	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing



15	The 92 Pācittiyas: Sappāṇaka (7th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMW8DZD	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
16	The 92 Pācittiyas: Sahadhammika (8th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMW6XS1	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
17	The 92 Pācittiyas: Ratana (9th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMW729B	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
18	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Parimaṇḍala (1st Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMVRTLY	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
19	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Ujjagghika (2nd Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DJCSSCJ	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing



20	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Khambhakata (3rd Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNMX5BK2	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
21	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Sakkacca (4th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNN314HB	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
22	The 75 Sekhiya Rules of the Pātimokkha: Kabaḷa (5th Part)	November 20, 2024	B0DNRBBPB9	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing
23	Teacher Manual Handbook: Introduction to Monastic Principles	November 5, 2024	B0DM2Q1J6S	www.amazon.com	Kindle Direct Publishing

Abstract

"Custodians of the Buddha’s Sacred Relics" is a profound exploration of the Buddha’s sacred relics and the stupas enshrining them. This book takes readers on a historical and spiritual journey, delving into the symbolism, preservation, and rituals associated with relics across Asia. From Emperor Ashoka’s monumental stupas to the enigmatic relics of Gandhara, it unveils the timeless devotion and cultural significance behind these sacred monuments. Richly detailed and deeply inspiring, this book invites readers to reflect on the Buddha’s teachings and their enduring legacy of compassion, mindfulness, and liberation.